

...AND HIS MOTHER CALLED HIM BILL

August 28, 1967

Duke Ellington, *piano*

Cat Anderson, Mercer Ellington,
Herbie Jones, Cootie Williams, *trumpet*

Clark Terry, *flugelhorn*

(does not appear on *Blood Count*)

Lawrence Brown, Buster Cooper,
trombone

Chuck Connors, *bass trombone*

Johnny Hodges, *alto saxophone*

Russell Procope, Jimmy Hamilton,
alto saxophone and clarinet

Paul Gonsalves, *tenor saxophone*

Harry Carney, *baritone saxophone*
and *clarinet*

Aaron Bell, *bass*

Steve Little, *drums*

RCA Studio A, New York City

Boo-Dah (Strayhorn) (mtx: UPA1-8528)

U.M.M.G. (Strayhorn) (mtx: UPA1-8529)

Blood Count (Strayhorn) (mtx: UPA1-8530)

Smada (Strayhorn-Ellington)

(mtx: UPA1-8531)—previously unissued

August 30, 1967

Same, except omit Terry;

add John Sanders, *valve trombone*

Rock Skippin' at the Blue Note
(Strayhorn-Ellington) (mtx: UPA1-8532)

Rain Check (Strayhorn) (mtx: UPA1-8533)

Midriff (Strayhorn) (mtx: UPA1-8534)—
previously unissued

My Little Brown Book (Strayhorn)

(mtx: UPA1-8535)—previously unissued

Same session.

Duke Ellington, *piano*

Lotus Blossom (Strayhorn)

(mtx: UPA1-8539)

...AND HIS MOTHER CALLED HIM BILL

September 1, 1967

Same as August 28,

except omit Terry.

Snibor (Strayhorn) (mtx: UPA1-8536)

After All (Strayhorn) (mtx: UPA1-8537)

All Day Long (Strayhorn) (mtx: UPA1-8538)

Same session.

Duke Ellington, *piano*

Harry Carney, *baritone saxophone*

Aaron Bell, *bass*

Lotus Blossom (Strayhorn)

(mtx: UPA1-8539)—previously unissued
alternate take

November 15, 1967

Same as August 28,

except omit Terry;

Jeff Castleman, *bass*, for Bell;

Sam Woodyard, *drums*, for Little.

Coast Recorders, San Francisco.

Day-Dream (Strayhorn-Ellington)

(mtx: WPA5-0917)

The Intimacy of the Blues (Strayhorn)

(mtx: WPA5-0918)

Charpoy (Strayhorn) (mtx: WPA5-0919)

Executive Producer:
Steve Backer

Reissue Produced by Ed Michel

Digital Remixes by Ray Hall

Original Production by Brad McCuen

Original Recording by Ed Begley

(New York) and Walt P

(no further identification)

(San Francisco)

...AND HIS MOTHER CALLED HIM BILL

Billy Strayhorn and Duke Ellington, working together and separately for more than 25 years, developed a wide-ranging, omnivorous musical sensibility.

Conventional musical definitions and notions of "jazz history," based as they are on the increasingly questionable concept of an orderly evolutionary progress, have little relevance to this body of work. *Lush Life*,

the composition Strayhorn presented to Ellington on first meeting him in 1938, cannot be squared with any orderly historical transition from swing to bop. Harmonically and melodically, it is much more challeng-

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ing than ballad material favored by the bop masters tended to be. Outside the Ellington organization, its implications went unrealized until the late '50s, when the first of John Coltrane's memorable recordings of the theme pointed the way. And only in the last few years have a significant number of musicians begun to tackle Strayhorn's last masterpiece, *Blood Count*, with impressive interpretations by James Newton and John Stubblefield leading the way.

...AND HIS MOTHER CALLED HIM BILL, recorded just three months after Strayhorn's death, when the pain of his loss was still audible in the music as a kind of jagged edge, is definitive. It illuminates the inner dynamic of the Ellington-Strayhorn collaboration with a clarity born of emotional urgency. And because it consists entirely of Strayhorn and Strayhorn-Ellington compositions, it provides a uniquely full-bodied portrait of Strayhorn, who was capable of interacting so seamlessly with Ellington that even the two of them had trouble pinpointing where one man's contribution ended and the other's began.

One important distinction has to do with the two men's musical educations. Andre Hodeir and Gunther Schuller have written that "Ellington taught himself harmony at

the piano, and acquired the rudiments of orchestration by experimenting with his band." Strayhorn, who was born in Dayton, Ohio, in 1915, making him sixteen years younger than Ellington, received a conventional, and extensive, musical education while growing up in Hillsboro, North Carolina, and in Pittsburgh. He played blues with authority, and composed new tunes using popular-song formats, in time-honored jazz tradition—*Rock Skipkin' at the Blue Note*, for example. But on earlier Ellington records that feature Strayhorn's piano his classical training comes through clearly. It's equally evident in his penchant for juxtaposing altered scales and extensions of conventional harmony, as in *Smada*, and in his independence from the conventions of blues and pop-song chorus structures.

One shouldn't make too much of this distinction. It was Ellington, not Strayhorn, who wrote *Clothed Woman* (1947), probably the first genuinely atonal composition in jazz. And among Ellington's other compositions there are plenty that forego conventional chorus structures in favor of utterly idiosyncratic forms. Nevertheless, Strayhorn's more European-style musical schooling had a significant impact on the kind of music he wrote, and on his arranging and orchestrating. It enriched

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the musical language he developed, but it never robbed his music of emotional or rhythmic vitality. Listen to the remarkable *All Day Long*, which has extremely unconventional structural elements and jarring, dissonant chord voicings, but also makes use of one of the oldest devices in big band jazz—the dialogue between brass and reed sections—and swings joyously.

Strayhorn's music has it all—structural sophistication and expressive resonance, the complexity of labyrinthine chord progressions and, to borrow a tune title from this album, *The Intimacy of the Blues*. This determination not to be limited by categories, to explore and utilize a whole world of music without ever losing sight of the emotional imperatives that are the wellsprings of any expressive art, makes Strayhorn seem essentially modern, in a 1980s sense. It's no wonder he's been such a role model and musical beacon for the latest generation of jazz-rooted composer-players, from Anthony Davis to James Newton to Henry Threadgill.

In Strayhorn's music each composition conjures its own theory, its own rules of structure and syntax, and this, too, is recognizably modern in implication. It makes his work relevant to present-day musicians in a way that bop, for all its beauty and brilliance, simply cannot be.

Looking back at the jazz transition of the late '30s and early '40s with the aid of hindsight, it becomes apparent that bop was not exactly the complication and elaboration of swing-style usages the histories depict. In bop, certain musical tendencies were codified into a distinctive language, a way of playing and expressing oneself. Certain Strayhorn and Ellington works of the '40s are as advanced, by any reasonable criteria, as anything the boppers were playing, but Strayhorn and Ellington didn't stop to codify these advances. Bop, in its search for a steely, startling new sound, excluded certain sounds and feelings that had been part of the jazz heritage through the swing era. Strayhorn and Ellington were inclusive, writing and playing everything from the most abstruse tone clusters (listen to Ellington's noise-piano in *U.M.M.G.* and *Midriff*) to gorgeously straightforward ballads to down-the-middle big-band swingers like *Charpoy*.

This inclusiveness is indicative of a generosity of spirit, and that generosity, more than any historical significance, makes ...AND HIS MOTHER CALLED HIM BILL an unforgettable listening experience. Strayhorn had so much to give that not even the final stages of a fatal illness silenced him completely. The titles of his later compositions (*U.M.M.G.*, for Upper Manhattan

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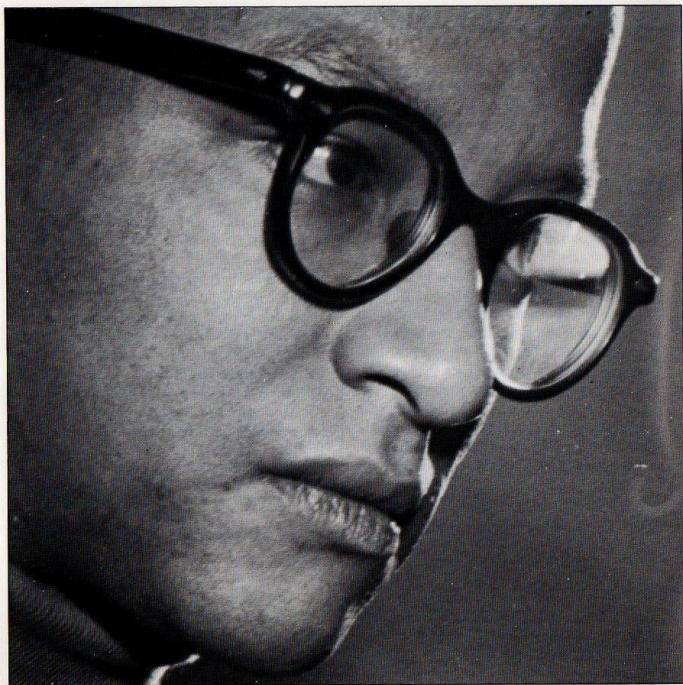
Medical Group, and *Blood Count*) bear grim witness to what his life had become, yet the music itself exudes an indomitable humanity. *Blood Count* in particular has an immediate and devastating impact, speaking simultaneously of fear, longing, resignation, pride, doubt, faith and many more apparently conflicting emotions, all balanced on the knife's edge of a man's life, all vividly brought to life whenever the music is heard.

This is one of Johnny Hodges' greatest performances. He is still *angry* that Strayhorn has been taken, and for once the familiar adjectives—serene, unruffled—cannot be applied to his playing. He sings, from deep inside, the certain knowledge that any moment can be a man's last moment, and his playing cuts right to the heart. *Day Dream* is the other side of the coin, a Hodges improvisation of luminous beauty, the spiritual strength underlying its

reflective surface suggested by the brass chorale effect in the background.

But all the orchestra members responded to the occasion of this tribute with playing above and beyond their customary high standards. And digitally remastered, on CD, the music has an even brighter glow. Listening on earphones, you're right in the middle of the orchestra, and the lines of communication open up as ideas, impulses, in-jokes and deep feelings are tossed back and forth among the members of the Ellington family. *The Intimacy of the Blues* doesn't get much more intimate than this. And now, with newly discovered performances added to the material released on the original album, we have this one-of-a-kind event—an evocation of a spirit whose depth and breadth only these lifelong associates truly knew—in its totality. If there's music more sublime than this, I sure would like to know about it.

—ROBERT PALMER



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BILLY STRAYHORN

Poor Little Sweet Pea, Billy Strayhorn, William Thomas Strayhorn, the biggest human being who ever lived, a man with the greatest courage, the most majestic artistic stature, a highly skilled musician whose impeccable taste commanded the respect of all musicians and the admiration of all listeners.

His audience at home and abroad marveled at the grandeur of his talent and the mantle of tonal supremacy that he wore only with grace. He was a beautiful human being, adored by a wide range of friends—rich, poor, famous and unknown. Great artists pay homage to Billy Strayhorn's God-given ability and mastery of his craft. Because he had a rare sensitivity and applied himself to his gifts, he successfully married melody, words and harmony, equating the fitting with happiness.

His greatest virtue, I think, was his honesty—not only to others but to himself. His listening-hearing self was totally intolerant of his writing-playing self when, or if, any

compromise was expected, or considered expedient. Condescension did not exist in the mind of Billy Strayhorn.

He spoke English perfectly and French very well. He demanded freedom of expression and lived in what we consider the most important of moral freedoms: freedom from hate, unconditionally; freedom from all self-pity (even throughout all the pain and bad news); freedom from fear of possibly doing something that might help another more than it might help himself, and freedom from the kind of pride that could make a man feel he was better than his brother or neighbor.

His patience was incomparable and unlimited. He had no aspirations to enter into any kind of competition, yet the legacy he leaves, his *oeuvre*, will never be less than the ultimate on the highest plateau of culture (whether by comparison or not).

God bless Billy Strayhorn.

—DUKE ELLINGTON
May 31, 1967

BLUEBIRD COMPACT DISCS

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Sonny Rollins
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Begin the Beguine

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John Sanders, *trombone*

Johnny Hodges, Russell Procope, Jimmy Hamilton, Paul Gonsalves,

Harry Carney, *saxophones and clarinet*

Aaron Bell, Jeff Castleman, *bass* Steve Little, Sam Woodyard, *drums*

TRACKS

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Boo-dah (3:29) | 9 Lotus Blossom (3:54) |
| 2 U.M.M.G. (3:12) | 10 Snibor (4:16) |
| 3 Blood Count (4:17) | 11 After All (3:46) |
| 4 Smada (3:17)—Previously unreleased | 12 All Day Long (2:54) |
| 5 Rock Skippin' at the
Blue Note (2:59) | 13 Lotus Blossom (4:58)
—Previously unreleased alternate take |
| 6 Rain Check (4:34) | 14 Day-dream (4:17) |
| 7 Midriff (4:29)—Previously unreleased | 15 The Intimacy of the Blues (2:59) |
| 8 My Little Brown Book (4:10)
—Previously unreleased | 16 Charpoy (3:05) |

Public performance clearance—ASCAP

Executive Producer: Steve Backer

Reissue Produced by Ed Michel

Cover Illustration: Daniel Maffia

Art Directors: Neal Pozner, J.J. Steinhilber



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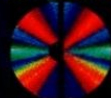
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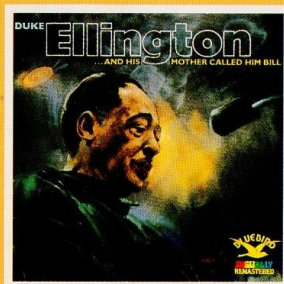
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DUKE ELLINGTON
AND HIS MOTHER
CALLED HIM BILL



BLUEBIRD

Digitally Remastered

- ✕ **AIR**
AIR LORE
- ✕ **LOUIS ARMSTRONG**
POPS: THE 1940'S
SMALL BAND SIDES
- ✕ **CHARLIE BARNET & HIS ORCHESTRA**
CLAP HANDS
HERE COMES CHARLIE
- ✕ **ART BLAKEY & THE JAZZ**
MESSENGERS
THEORY OF ART
- ✕ **ANTHONY BRAXTON**
CREATIVE ORCHESTRA 1976
- ✕ **GARY BURTON**
ARTIST'S CHOICE

- ✕ **AL COHN & ZOOT SIMAS**
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- ✕ **ORNETTE COLEMAN**
FORMS AND SOUNDS
- ✕ **DUKE ELLINGTON**
AND HIS MOTHER
CALLED HIM BILL
- ✕ **GIL EVANS**
THERE COMES A TIME
- ✕ **MAYNARD FERGUSON**
THE BIRDLAND DREAMBAND
- ✕ **STAN GETZ WITH**
ARTHUR FIEDLER
AT TANGLEWOOD
A SONG AFTER SUNDOWN
- ✕ **BENNY GOODMAN**
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- ✕ **THE 1963 BENNY GOODMAN**
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HIS ORCHESTRA
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- ✕ **FREDDIE GREEN/AL COHN**
NATURAL RHYTHM
- ✕ **LIONEL HAMPTON**
HOT MALLETS, VOL. 1
- ✕ **COLEMAN HAWKINS**
BODY & SOUL
- ✕ **J.J. JOHNSON &**
HIS BIG BANDS
SAY WHEN

- ✕ **JOHN KLEMMER**
NEXUS ONE
- ✕ **LAMBERT, HENDRICKS & RAVAN**
SWINGIN' TILL
THE GIRLS COME HOME
- ✕ **MAJOR GLENN MILLER**
AND THE ARMY
AIRFORCE BAND
1943-44
- ✕ **CHARLES MINGUS**
NEW TIJUANA MOODS
- ✕ **THE RED NORVO SMALL BANDS**
JUST A MOOD
- ✕ **BUD POWELL**
TIME WAS
- ✕ **BUDDY RICH**
THE AMAZING BUDDY RICH
- ✕ **SONNY ROLLINS**
THE QUARTETS
FEATURING JIM HALL
- ✕ **GEORGE RUSSELL SMALLTET**
JAZZ WORKSHOP
- ✕ **THE SAMPLER**
SHORTY ROGERS, RED NORVO,
BUD POWELL, ART BLAKEY,
CHARLES MINGUS
- ✕ **THE SEXTET OF**
ORCHESTRA USA
THEATRE MUSIC OF
KURT WEILL
- ✕ **ARTIE SHAW**
BEGIN THE BEGUINE
- ✕ **FATS WALLER**
THE JOINT IS JUMPIN'