



# Duke Ellington

- April 3, 1943,  
Midnight - 12:30 a.m. EWT
1. **TAKE THE "A" TRAIN**  
(Billy Strayhorn) ..... 0:40
  2. **HAYFOOT, STRAWFOOT**  
(Drake - Lenk - McGrane) ..... 2:36
  3. **IT CAN'T BE WRONG**  
(Steiner - Gannon) ..... 3:02
  4. **WHAT AM I HERE FOR ?**  
(Duke Ellington) ..... 3:34
  5. **MAINSTEM** a.k.a. Altitude  
(Duke Ellington) ..... 3:07
  6. **COULD IT BE YOU ?**  
(Cole Porter) ..... 2:51
  7. **GOIN' UP**  
(Duke Ellington) ..... 3:44
  8. **DON'T GET AROUND  
MUCH ANYMORE**  
(Duke Ellington) ..... 3:48
  9. **NEVADA**  
(Donaldson - Greene) ..... 2:42
  10. **THINGS AIN'T WHAT  
THEY USED TO BE**  
(Duke Ellington) ..... 1:02
- April 4, 1943, 10:45 -11:00 p.m. EWT
11. **TAKE THE "A" TRAIN**  
(Billy Strayhorn) ..... 0:46
  12. **DON'T GET AROUND  
MUCH ANYMORE**  
(Duke Ellington) ..... 4:01
13. **MAIN STEM** a.k.a. Altitude  
(Duke Ellington) ..... 3:00
  14. **I DON'T WANT  
ANYBODY AT ALL**  
(Jule Styne - Herb Magidson) .. 3:12
  15. **JOHNNY COME LATELY**  
(Billy Strayhorn) ..... 2:51
  16. **THINGS AIN'T WHAT  
THEY USED TO BE**  
(Duke Ellington) ..... 0:34
- June 6, 1943, 7:00 - 7:30 p.m. EWT
17. **MOON MIST**  
(Mercer Ellington) ..... 2:59
  18. **YOU'LL NEVER KNOW**  
(Warren - Gordon) ..... 3:08
  19. **TONIGHT I SHALL SLEEP**  
(Ellington - Gordon) ..... 3:34
  20. **I DON'T KNOW WHAT  
KIND OF BLUES I GOT**  
(Duke Ellington) ..... 3:23
  21. **DON'T GET AROUND  
MUCH ANYMORE**  
(Duke Ellington) ..... 4:31
  22. **MOON MIST**  
(Mercer Ellington) ..... 0:35
- Total time 59:57

## Personnel:

April 3 and 4, 1943:

Ray Nance, Rex Stewart, Harold Baker, Wallace Jones, trumpets; Lawrence Brown, Joseph Nanton, Juan Tizol, trombones; Johnny Hodges, alto saxophone; Sax Mallard, alto saxophone and clarinet; Chauncey Houghton, clarinet; Ben Webster, tenor saxophone; Harry Carney, baritone saxophone and bass clarinet; Duke Ellington, piano; Fred Guy guitar; Alvin "Junior" Raglin, bass; Sonny Greer, drums.

June 6, 1943:

Taft Jordan, trumpet, replaces Rex Stewart. Sandy Williams, trombone, replaces Lawrence Brown. Nat Jones, alto saxophone and clarinet; and Jimmy Hamilton, clarinet and tenor saxophone; replace Mallard and Houghton.

Pastel Period broadcast scripted & produced by Leonard Feather. Scott Douglas, MBS staff announcer.

Original source material courtesy of Jerry Valburn.

Digital transfers by Jack H. Towers.

CEDAR restoration & additional digital remastering by Björn Almstedt.

Have you ever driven down a lonely moonlit highway in the middle of nowhere, and experienced the miracle of finding some great music on your car radio? This CD, Duke Ellington Live at the Hurricane, is like that, only better. Imagine spinning your radio dial, searching the sonic landscape of booming static and garbled voices in that magic, late night world, when radio signals boom hundreds of miles farther than during the day. A home run gets hit by you can't tell who; a news reporter details the war's progress; and farm prices are rising. Amidst the static, you detect the faint sound of a piano player's meandering as dancers chatter and cocktail glasses clink. You fine-tune and drive toward the signal to pull in that sound. Applause surges from the packed dance floor, and you hear those unmistakable chords.

## Say man, we're on that "A" Train. From the Hurricane at 49th and Broadway in New York City

As through some wrinkle in the airwaves, you've captured a signal from the long-lost world of New York nightclubs. Not just any moment, but Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra opening at the Hurricane restaurant, in the heart of Broadway, during the middle of World War II. At the peak of popularity and artistic acclaim, Duke Ellington was back in New York in a big way, and the country was tuning in.

"Ellington Is Back on Stem," trumpeted Down Beat's April 1, 1943 headline. "Stem" as in "Main Stem" or "Great White Way," that gaudy stretch of Broadway surrounding Times Square re-dubbed the "Great Dim Way" as the occasional report of a U-boat off-shore required lackouts. This was Ellington's first "location" gig in New York since his 1938 stay at the midtown Cotton Club. As Ellington confidant Leonard Feather put it, this was "the kind of engagement that only existed in the golden years of swing; the band stayed there, with liberal airtime, for six months." Broadway was no ordinary location for a "location." "Entertainment Capital of the World" was more than a publicist's hype. Not only was this the "legitimate theater" of Broadway musicals where "Oklahoma!" opened the same week, this was the Broadway of nocturnal playgrounds with exotic names like the Copacabana, La Martinique, and the Latin Quarter. Comedian Milton Berle and singer Frank Sinatra reigned. If this era was before your time, and you can't picture the scene, think of I Love Lucy, with bandleader-husband Ricky Ricardo down at "the club." Entertainment attorney Dave Wolper found himself a club owner when his client Virginia Hill needed investors for her Hurricane restaurant. Wolper needed a name-band to take his nightclub big-time.

When the William Morris Agency's hustling new manager, Cress Courtney, landed Duke Ellington a six-week contract with Wolper including an "unheard of clause" giving Ellington an option to stay twelve additional weeks at the Hurricane, and guarantees of six radio broadcasts weekly, it couldn't have come at a better time. After being based in Los Angeles for much of 1941 and 1942, Duke and his entourage had returned to criss-crossing the United States and Canada in the exhausting road schedule they knew all too well. "Going on the road was tough," recalled Rex Stewart. "Trains were commandeered; the armed forces, of course, took precedence, while we scrambled to get to our gigs however possible." Segregated facilities offered cold

comfort. "Food rationing meant that the fare was even worse in the greasy spoons that catered to us."

War also meant that half the band was eligible for the military draft. The reed section had become a revolving door since clarinetist Barney Bigard decided he had enough of life on the road and left in July of 1942. Bigard's replacement, Chauncey Haughton, as well as Ben Webster were reportedly scheduled for induction physicals. Opening week at the Hurricane marked the closing of Haughton's ten-month stint with Duke; the clarinetist would soon be in the Army. Ellington's fellow Washingtonian, Otto Hardwicke, was away on one of his self-proclaimed vacations, and his lead alto role was in the hands of one of history's more obscure and short-termed Ellingtonians, the appropriately nick-named alto saxophone and clarinet player from Chicago, Oett "Sax" Mallard.

Meanwhile, another war raged. James C. Petrillo - "Little Caesar" - the dictatorial head of the American Federation of Musicians union, declared a recording ban. Essentially a strike, the ban was in its ninth month, and had put huge pressure on Ellington's bottom line. Duke lived to record. Half of Ellington's income was from the sale of records; another quarter was from the sale of sheet music.

Ellington ploughed ahead, navigating through the wartime perils of show business like a battleship dodging salvos. He commanded a remarkable position at the top of the entertainment world. Don't Get Around Much Anymore was a Number 1 hit. The Hollywood musical Cabin in the Sky, featuring Ellington's Famous Orchestra, opened in theatres. Victor Records released an 8-tune retrospective called the Ellington Panorama. Leopold Stowkowski and Igor Stravinsky recognized Ellington as a peer, and Ellington's first Carnegie Hall concert ten weeks prior had added to Duke's prestige as a composer, despite mixed reviews for Black, Brown and Beige. Although the orchestra followed their Carnegie appearance with concerts in Boston, Cleveland, and Hartford, "direct from his triumphant concert tour," as the Hurricane advertisements said, was an exaggeration. Ellington still had to take whatever work was available, and the majority of Ellington's bookings were in theaters (with a movie and floorshow) or dance halls, and usually lasted no longer than one week, with lots of one-nighters in-between. It was a grueling schedule of travel and performances, with as many as 4 to 6 shows a day from noon until past midnight. The best jobs

the locations with their all-important radio broadcasts, went most often to the white bands.

#### Reservations: "Albert" CO. 5-1995

"The top band of all comes from Carnegie Hall to the Hurricane," read the Hurricane menu, half of which is devoted to alcohol, including its namesake whiskey cocktail - "the Hurricane" at 50 cents. Whiskey was 75 cents and cognac one dollar. Prohibition, which had ended 10 years earlier, was a distant memory. The entrees covered a range of American favorites from Chicken Chow Mein at \$1.75 to Sirloin Steak at \$4.00. There was no cover charge, but there was a \$2.00 minimum charge, \$3.00 after 10:00 p.m. on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Multiply these prices twenty to thirty times to get today's equivalents. Nevertheless, wartime brought full employment, many had money to spend, and the tables and the dance floor of the Hurricane were filled every night. A parade of celebrities and bandleaders climbed the stairs to the second story club, passing under the gaze of imperious headwaiter Albert Berryman, "known to three decades of wealthy playboys simply as Albert."

All the New York daily newspapers previewed opening night at the Hurricane. "One of the really important nightclub events of the past several weeks is the opening tonight of Duke Ellington and his orchestra in David J. Wolper's new revue, Mood Indigo. This should be a celebrity-packed opening," predicted the New York Post. "Dave Wolper becomes Broadway's first lawyer-producer tonight with the opening of Duke Ellington's band at the Hurricane," quipped the New York Journal American. "The literary New Yorker, in its Goings on About Town pages under "Broadway Atmosphere," was succinct. "Duke Ellington and his band are playing here, which should be all you need to know." The national edition of The Afro-American noted without comment that "Duke Ellington and band will head an all-white show at Broadway's Hurricane" and Variety added that the show will "consist of white acts, with no racial swerving from the current policy." Except, of course, for the headliner. It was an incongruous scene: the genius of black bandleaders fronting a white floorshow for a white audience. The unspoken racial code of the day meant that the Hurricane and countless other venues across the country were essentially "whites-only." There were a few exceptions: a table headed by Duke's personal physician and close friend, Dr. Arthur Logan, or the occasional celebrity such as Count Basie, the only African-American listed in the

souvenir book's guide to orchestra leaders who frequented the Hurricane.

Earl Wilson's account of opening night in his It Happened Last Night column in the New York Post is most descriptive: "I wasn't one of the longhairs who went to Carnegie Hall a few weeks ago to hear Duke Ellington, principally because they won't hustle a scotch and soda to your seat while you're a customer in that hallowed edifice. Now, however, it's possible to hear the Duke without your drinking interfered with. It became possible when Ellington, looking wonderfully mannish and muscular in his white tie and tails, opened an engagement at Dave Wolper's Hurricane on Broadway. The sight of Duke being lowered from the ceiling on a stage that seemed to come right out of the roof was one of the most striking that Saloon Society witnessed last night. The Duke, sitting up there with his fingers on the keyboard of a piano, might have been coming down from heaven, although I'm not trying to tell anyone that such was the case. His coattail fell down over the back of the piano bench, and as the stage lowered he sat there playing Sophisticated Lady, Mood Indigo, (In) My Solitude and other of his own compositions. His band was on the same descending stage, but behind a curtain, and unseen. Ina Ray Hutton, the pretty band leader, was behind me, and I heard her say, 'I love this! All over the joint, band leaders, musicians and arrangers were tapping their feet, keeping time, or humming the familiar tunes.'

"The Saloonites who were present for the opening included many names of importance in the band and music business - Charles Barnet, Chico Marx, Dick Stabile, Ozzie Nelson, Harriet Hilliard, and some in other fields of entertainment, such as: Jerry Lester, Jackie Miles, Lou Walters, who owns the Latin Quarter; Doc Marcus, Jeanne Cagney, the Larry Morris with the Walter Simmons; Monte Prosser of the Copacabana, and the showgirls, Stormy Knight and Louise Jarvis. The place was packed, and Albert, the headwaiter, had something of a traffic problem, but handled it well."

"The most representative Broadway crowd in several seasons" corroborated Gene Knight of the Journal American. "The show was fine and sprightly and the crowd loved it. But it was the Ellington music, on display before, during and after, that overnight stamped the Hurricane as one of Midtown's 'must' stopping spots. Duke's position as America's ace jazz composer has long been secure. The Goodmans, the Dorseys, the Barnets, et al., acknowledge his supremacy. He has raised Swing to its highest level.

The Hurricane audience seemed to sense that fact and gave Ellington and his men a rousing reception. And the Duke, for his part, showed his appreciation by rendering one of the finest performances ever to emanate from a night-club bandstand."

"It seemed all Broadway tried to climb into the Hurricane, which is no miniature joint, and Ellington kept 'em rocking," read Variety's report on opening night. Elliot Grennard, writing in The Billboard, noted though, that "twice a night, for an interminable length each time, the ork is buried in a floor show score, supplying background for a puppeteer and acrobatic and ballroom dancers. The time left at Ellington's disposal isn't nearly enough for the ravenous appetites of his admirers." Variety's sharp-tongued reporter had a field day panning the show. "The June Taylor's sextet of girl dancers' opening quasi-magic act is prime corn." Harris, Claire and Shannon, "the hoofing trio, made the error of taking the applause seriously for three encores." The highlight of the show was Bob Bromley's "clever puppet act" of "strip-teasing marionettes." The following week The New Yorker made a subtle revision to their listing. "Duke Ellington and his band should be enough for you, but there's also a show." Small wonder that Earl Wilson reported in the Post on Monday, April the 5th that "although Wolper has been telling (Duke) that his band can knock off at 3:30, he has been staying right on to 4, or 4:05." Ellington wanted to get some music in "pure Ellingtonia undistilled for popular tastes," as Grennard described the closing sets.

Ellington had an ulterior motive that kept that famous smile on his face through this somewhat bizarre scene. In the following year's landmark portrait of Ellington in The New Yorker, The Hot Bach, Richard Boyer explained that Duke "lost \$18,000" on what turned out to be a six-month engagement at the Hurricane. Despite the losses, Duke renewed his option and "figured that it was a good investment because of the Broadway address and the free radio time and publicity." The gamble was worth it - Ellington's take jumped from a \$2,500 per week guarantee against a draw at the Hurricane to \$8,000 per week for the October engagement at the Capitol Theater a few blocks down Broadway. Ellington was under no illusions about the Broadway crowd, telling Leonard Feather, "they think they know all about show business. If you want to make a living, you have to play pop songs or whatever suits their requirements, because Broadway represents the publishers, the bookers, the theater owners, everyone who is involved in keeping the band working."

### The Duke is on the air!

Duke was one of the first bandleaders to master the live remote. Beginning in 1927, Ellington built his orchestra's fame with broadcasts from the original Cotton Club, back in the early days of radio. Now in its final years as the most powerful communications medium, radio was dominated by four networks: Mutual, NBC Red, CBS, and the Blue network (spun off by court order from NBC and soon to be re-named ABC). The daily schedules looked much like today's TV schedules - news and game shows in early evening, followed by comedies and dramas, then best yet, late night live bands. The Hurricane broadcasts were carried over the Mutual Broadcast Network, and its flagship station in New York, WOR. Duke got to keep his name and music before the public during the recording ban that stretched until November. Fortunate for us, too, as only airchecks document this 14-month era of the Ellington orchestra.

"The question of just what kind of program Ellington should rig up for remotes is one that still remains to be resolved," Grennard perceptively wrote in his evaluation of Ellington's Hurricane broadcasts in Billboard. "Should he stick to the stuff that made him world famous, but is admittedly difficult to understand, even to the music-wise listeners, and make the man-in-the-street who likes to listen to the radio go hang? Or should he make concessions to the average level of taste, and line his programs from the Hit Parade?"

Ellington perhaps observed from his father, a caterer, a few things about handling the demands of a hungry public. The secret was in the presentation. You had to have a little something for everyone, and be thoroughly prepared. To pull it off you had to have a crew that understands your every move and is ready to hit. Ellington's band understood the importance of the gig and the broadcasts. In brilliantly paced and executed programs on Saturday and Sunday night, Duke promotes his orchestra and his music, satisfies his hard-core record collecting fans, swing-crazed jitterbugs, and casual listeners, and handles a few requests. For maximum pleasure, try listening to Duke Ellington Live at the Hurricane at the time of our first broadcast, Saturday at midnight. Mix yourself a Hurricane. Put the CD in a boom box and place inside the console of a vintage radio. Turn the lights low and the music up.

**Mutual invites you to listen to music that's played for you by Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra.**

Take the "A" Train opens each of the six night-a-week broadcasts. In 1943 Billy Strayhorn was best known as the composer of the most recognizable theme on radio, one that Strayhorn originally thought sounded too much like Fletcher Henderson.

Duke's first order of business is promoting his own hits, especially Don't Get Around Much Anymore, a remake of Never No Lament with lyrics added by Bob Russel. The Inkspots' vocal version of Don't Get Around began the week at Number 1 on Billboard's "Harlem Hit Parade." It was also Number 1 on Billboard's chart of "Songs with Most Radio Plugs." Ellington's What Am I Here For? is perfect for dancing or listening, not too fast, not too slow, not too sweet, and not too hot. Nanton, Stewart and Webster are featured on this life-affirming tune that would stay in the Ellington book for the next 30 years. Goin' Up is from the film Cabin in the Sky which had just premiered on March 11. Starring Ethel Waters, Lena Horne, and Eddie (Rochester) Anderson, Vincente Minelli's film adaptation of the musical was an improvement over Hollywood's stereotypical portrayal of African-Americans, yet fell short with its "psalm shouting, crap-shooting proclivities." Controversy aside, most agreed that the Ellington orchestra's brief but climatic cabaret scene was the film's highlight. Lawrence Brown and Ben Webster reprise their film roles as featured soloists.

While Ellington and the orchestra were honing their acting skills, Billy Strayhorn was off-camera, handling the arranging of the band's vocals and pop tunes, usually uncredited. Thanks to Walter van de Leur's comprehensive analysis of Strayhorn's manuscripts, Something to Live For, we can find Strayhorn's "musical fingerprints" all over these broadcasts. Usually acknowledged as "Assistant Arranger," Strayhorn worked especially well with the vocalists. Betty Roche is featured on the topical Hayfoot, Strayfoot along with Rex Stewart and Ben Webster. Duke hired Betty as a replacement in 1942 for the ailing Ivie Anderson, and loved her ability to learn "new songs so quickly, and they always came across as Betty Roche originals." The beautiful 23-year-old dark-skinned woman shows the poise that won her the Amateur Contest at the Apollo Theatre as a teenager. Burdened with replacing the enormously popular Ivie, Betty made her own mark with her musicianship, blues feeling, and contemporary attitude. Her generation of after-hours experimenters in Harlem were starting to make their mark in the nearby

52nd Street clubs. "She had a soul inflection in a bop state of intrigue," as Duke said. It was typical, perhaps, of Ms. Roche's luck that Victor had already issued Hayfoot Strawfoot on a 78 rpm record with Ivie as the vocalist. Betty Roche's first stay with Ellington would last the same duration as the recording ban. This CD is a welcome opportunity to hear more of her.

For whatever favor, debt, or amount of cash Ellington considered, three other popular tunes with Strayhorn arrangements were aired. Lawrence Brown carries the melody of It Can't Be Wrong, from the movie Now Voyager, and number 7 on Variety's list of most "plugs" the number of times carried over New York network flagship stations. At Number 9 was Could It Be You? which features trumpeter Harold Baker, whose nickname was "Shorty" but could as well have been "Gorgeous Tone." Betty Roche is again featured on Jule Styne's I Don't Want Anybody At All, the only one of this trio to get recorded.

It was common in those days for bands to play each other's hits. "Plugs," regardless of who the artist was, were a source of income to the owner of the song. According to Ed Sullivan's Little Old New York column in the New York Daily News, Ellington had been spending the week rehearsing with Tommy Dorsey for a joint performance with Ethel Waters at a Red Cross Benefit at Madison Square Garden that Sullivan himself was organizing. Dorsey had a current hit in Nevada. Valve trombonist Juan Tizol, a veteran of "sweet" music, is the featured soloist and likely arranger. The melody must have appealed to Tizol, for his smooth instrumental rendition of the corny lyrics, "We lived a dream by a cool mountain stream in Nevada," sounds as convincing as possible. Before one can get bored, Duke is back in the hot with some of the orchestra's most brilliant work, the two sides of a remarkable 78 recorded for Victor on July 26, 1942. Altitude (previously titled On Becoming a Square), wouldn't get issued until January of 1944, renamed once again as Main Stem. Ellington's series of dramatic episodes evoke Broadway Soloists Stewart, Hodges, Stewart (again), Nance, Houghton, Nanton, and Brown pass like a cast of characters, each with a dramatic entrance in this one-act romp. Main Stem is a blues in E-flat, a boldly shaded blues of tomorrow, rich in dynamics, but a blues nonetheless, the basis of hundreds of great Ellington compositions.

Another indication of Ellington's genius is that he welcomed a talent like Strayhorn into his organization without being threatened. We get unadulterated Strayhorn on Johnny Come Lately which, like its flip side, went through a series of names. Performed at Carnegie

Hall in January with the title of Stomp, its intention was to convey the return from a New Orleans funeral. As death gives meaning to life, this tune speaks of a desperate grab for a few fleeting moments of transcendent swing. It begins with intensity and builds from there. Harry Carney's stirring baritone sax is heard on the opening statement, followed by Lawrence Brown's statement of the second theme, then the fevered solos of trombonist "Tricky Sam" Nanton. Johnny Come Lately releases in and out of ecstasy - it was called funk even back then - as drummer Sonny Greer rocks the house and airwaves with backbeats in a way not heard on studio recordings. Walter van de Leur indicates in Something to Live For that Billy Strayhorn's handwriting reveals the original idea for the title was "Moe" - a nickname for Jimmy Blanton whose tragic death from tuberculosis at the age of 23 in 1942 was a fresh wound on the band's psyche. Bassist Junior Raglin gets the last word in, showing that as a former guitarist Raglin had more than absorbed the great bassist's revolutionary style.

The broadcasts close with Mercer Ellington's Things Ain't What They Used to Be. Johnny Hodges' alto waves a good night kiss that says "we'll do this again." As Metronome's review of a later aircheck said, "fifteen minutes pass in five," thanks to Ellington's sequencing and ability to segue from opening theme, to Ellington hit, Ellington art, pop hit, Strayhorn art, closing theme. Duke expands the mix for his half-hour programs, leaving you wanting more.

#### **Every shade of blue, from pastel to mood indigo**

On Sunday evening, May 16th at 7:00 p.m, Ellington began a new radio feature on an experimental basis, the Pastel Period broadcasts. Replacing the Symphonic Strings program on WOR, these were conceived as Sunday dinner-time listening music. Duke described it as "a style of whispering swing, or conversational music, without sacrificing the force of emotion, the impact of the rhythm or the luster of the melody."

There were Pastel precedents. For opening night at the Panther Room of the Hotel Sherman in Chicago on September 7, 1940, the dinner tables had printed programs for a concert titled, "Annotations to Your Dinner" with works by Ellington, Rachmaninoff and Fats Waller, typically ending in Mood Indigo. As Ted Hudson pointed out in the liner notes to The Duke in Boston, "whispering swing" of "muted brass and muffled reeds" was part of the hype for Duke's appearance at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in August

of 1939, Ellington's experience playing for dining goes back even earlier to his days playing "dicky" spots like the hunt clubs in rural Virginia outside his Washington, D.C., home. Who better for dinner music than Duke? Certainly food and conversation were among the Maestro's loves.

Ellington launched the new radio program at the time his band was undergoing wholesale personnel changes. There were four new members. Sax Mallard moved to the clarinet chair when Haughton went into the army, and Mallard's alto spot was filled for less than two months by the even more obscure Scotty Scott. Both Mallard and Scott were soon replaced by Nat Jones (primarily on alto) and Jimmy Hamilton (a clarinetist who could be seen backstage at the Hurricane brushing up on his tenor sax at Duke's insistence). Union problems would end Jones' association with the Ellington orchestra in October, when Hardwicke returned at the start of the month long engagement at the Capitol Theatre. Hamilton was just beginning his 25 year tenure as one of the great Ellingtonians. Sandy Williams is at trombone while Lawrence Brown is in California, expecting an induction notice that never comes. Taft Jordan is at trumpet as Rex Stewart has been lured away by his friend, guitarist Brick Fleagle, who offered work and a change of scenery in Hollywood and Mexico City. The newcomers blend with the muted tones of the Pastel broadcast. Ellington relies on his veterans.

Ray Nance's sentimental violin opens and closes each Pastel broadcast on its special theme, Moon Mist. Duke's son, Mercer Ellington, is listed as composer of this piece that Mercer confessed "Duke wrote by omission." Duke never fails to give Johnny Hodges a chance to plug Don't Get Around Much Anymore and a preview of a future hit, as Subtle Slough is 1946's Just Squeeze Me. Ben Webster's ballad style is spotlighted on You'll Never Know which comes from the hit parade. Strayhorn's busy again with arrangements to Oh! Lady Be Good, and Tonight I Shall Sleep (With a Smile on my Face) with more pillow talk from Webster. A highlight of this broadcast is Betty Roche's feature, I Don't Know What Kind of Blues I Got, and her conversation with Harry Carney's bass clarinet, Nanton's muted trombone, and Webster's tenor saxophone, create a blues as refined and polite as chamber music. Subtle Slough, Oh! Lady Be Good and Nevada are missing from this broadcast, due to insurmountable flaws in the original material.

Producer Carl A. Hällström hopes for a future double CD devoted solely to Pastel

Period broadcasts, which continued right up to the final Sunday evening at the Hurricane. Many airchecks survive, containing rarely heard Ellington performances, including Strayhorn arrangements of And Russia is Her Name and Ellington's Blue Belles of Harlem. Despite the flood of Ellington reissues since the Ellington centennial, the Pastel Period broadcasts have not been available on CD. This distinct style of Ellington and Strayhorn was later cited by both Gil Evans and Miles Davis as an inspiration to their "cool" school of music of the later 40s and 50s, and deserves further attention.

#### **Join us again when we ride on that "A" Train**

Ellington continued to pack them in at the Hurricane through September. The floor show changed to include other black artists, and the Orchestra was booked for a return engagement in 1944. Freed from the rigors of travel, Duke had plenty of time to enjoy the vibrant New York scene, write lots of music (including a number of shows), and to be Duke Ellington. He reaped what seems like an honor a week, including one from the James Weldon Johnson Society of New York University on April 26th for "20 years of distinguished contribution to American music," and the New York Newspaper Guild's 1943 award for "Great American Musician of the People" on the 30th at the Hotel Astor. Duke played benefits for all causes, evidently unpaid: Ed Sullivan's Red Cross Benefit at Madison Square Garden on April 6th, back at the Garden on April 20th for Greek War Relief, a War Bond rally at Central Park on May 1 (broadcast on WEAf and issued on DETS Volume 1) and back to the Garden again on June 7 for a black Freedom Rally.

Ellington's whirlwind activities were in harmony with the brilliant political strategy known as the Double V Campaign - Victory over Facism and Victory Over Racism. The fight abroad highlighted the contradictions at home. For his part, Duke preferred to express himself musically, and lead by example. "Ellington Does It Once More," The New York Amsterdam News reported the Duke's latest breakthrough. "Since the great composer-maestro's arrival at the famous Hurricane restaurant on Broadway, the world's entertainment center has gone all out for outstanding Negro orchestras." Two decades later, Ellington would remind America of its debt and black America of its investment. At the height of the Civil Rights struggle, Ellington wrote, performed, and narrated a stage production, My People. "Don't forget that my people have

fought and died in every war. Every enemy of the U.S.A. has had to face my people on the front lines." Ellington and his musicians had seen Nazism face-to-face during their Spring 1939 European tour while crossing Germany from Holland to Denmark. That steel-eyed look of hate was familiar, and Ellington rallied African-Americans, and all Americans, to the fight. Though the war's outcome seemed certain, no one knew how long or hard the sacrifice would be. Tomorrow one might be under fire on a beach in the Mediterranean or the Pacific. Tonight was to live and to love, to drink and to eat, to dance and to listen to the best band ever.

Listen again to Main Stem or Johnny Come Lately. From the first note Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra is on. They wipe away all doubt, all negative thoughts, as they cruise with the precision of a B-52. Powerful yet understated, the beat pulses. Everyone gets their say. The bombs are of the blues-busting variety, and as the pep section pushes, the band seems to elevate toward the very ceiling Ellington descended from. How can a philosophy that denies this music win? No way Hitler can defeat this! The irresistible rhythm is on the air, coast-to-coast, six nights a week in factories cranking all night and military bases and the homes of a nation going overtime. The signals were transmitted, to use Ellington's favorite expression, "beyond category" to all audiences. No need to call Albert for reservations. All you needed was a radio.

***Kenneth R. Steiner** September 15, 2002*

Dedicated to my parents, Robert and Louise Steiner. Thanks for their loving memories of war-time New York.

Thanks to the world-wide family of Ellington aficionados, especially Claire Gordon, Lorraine Feather, Morris Hodara, Sjef Hoefsmid, and Jerry Valburn; to John Johnson for the use of the Hurricane menu from the collection of Elmer and Vivian Johnson; and to the people of New York and their wonderful Public Library. Research inspired by Klaus Stratemann's Duke Ellington Day by Day and Film by Film. All original sources cited therein have been checked. Victor discographical information from The Duke Ellington Centennial Edition 24 CD set on RCA Victor.

Ken Steiner lives in Seattle with his wife and daughter. He thanks them for living with his endless repetitions of Johnny Come Lately.



DAVE  
WOLPER  
Presents



**DUKE ELLINGTON**  
AND HIS  
ORCHESTRA

starring in the new Revue  
"MOOD INDIGO"  
Musical Score by DUKE ELLINGTON

PLUS AN ARRAY OF STAGE and RADIO STARS

Dance to the Music of Duke Ellington's Orch. 7 P. M. to 4 A. M.  
SHOWS at 8 and 12:30

DINNERS  
from \$1.50

**HURRICANE**

Res. "ALBERT" Columbus 8-1995.  
8 WAY AT 49th ST.

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At The Hurricane - Original 1943 broadcasts

# Duke Ellington And His Orchestra

featuring BEN WEBSTER

1. Take The "A" Train 0:40
2. Hayfoot, Strawfoot 2:36
3. It Can't Be Wrong 3:02
4. What Am I Here For ? 3:34
5. Main Stem a.k.a. Altitude 3:07
6. Could It Be You ? 2:51
7. Goin' Up 3:44
8. Don't Get Around Much Anymore 3:48
9. Nevada 2:42
10. Things Ain't What They Used To Be 1:02
11. Take The "A" Train 0:46
12. Don't Get Around Much Anymore 4:01
13. Main Stem a.k.a. Altitude 3:00
14. I Don't Want Anybody At All 3:12
15. Johnny Come Lately 2:51
16. Things Ain't What They Used To Be 0:34
17. Moon Mist 2:59
18. You'll Never Know 3:08
19. Tonight I Shall Sleep 3:34
20. I Don't Know What Kind Of Blues I Got 3:23
21. Don't Get Around Much Anymore 4:31
22. Moon Mist 0:35

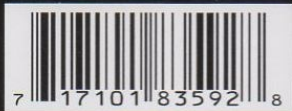
Total Time 59:57



Booklet notes by Kenneth R. Steiner.  
Booklet design: Eddie at ChrisnaMorten Art.

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