



THE CAPITOL SINGLES PLUS

HIGH FIDELITY  
RECORDING

JASMINE

A black and white portrait of Duke Ellington, smiling and wearing a checkered shirt. The portrait is the central focus of the album cover.

**DUKE ELLINGTON**  
*and his famous Orchestra*

1. **WITHOUT A SONG** (*Vincent Youmans, Billy Rose, Edward Eliscu*)  
Capitol - F2458 / Recorded 6th April 1953 / Released May 1953 (2:59)
2. **SATIN DOLL** (*Duke Ellington*) / Capitol - F2458 / Recorded 6th April 1953 / Released May 1953 (2:59)
3. **BALLIN' THE BLUES** (*Obba Duke*) / Capitol - F2503 / Recorded 9th April 1953 / Released June 1953 (3:02)
4. **NOTHIN', NOTHIN', BABY (WITHOUT YOU)** (*Duke Ellington*)  
Capitol - F2503 / Recorded 7th April 1953 / Released June 1953 (2:56)
5. **BLUEJEAN BEGUINE** (*Cat Anderson, Duke Ellington*) / Capitol - F2546 / Recorded 9th April 1953 / Released July 1953 (2:43)
6. **WARM VALLEY** (*Duke Ellington*) / Capitol - F2546 / Recorded 9th April 1953 / Released July 1953 (3:22)
7. **BOO-DAH** (*Billy Strayhorn*) / Capitol - F2598 / Recorded 9th April 1953 / Released September 1953 (2:54)
8. **GIVE ME THE RIGHT** (*Robert Mellin, Al Frisch*) / Capitol - F2598 / Recorded 30th June 1953 / Released September 1953 (2:46)
9. **BLUE MOON** (*Richard Rodgers, Lorenz Hart*) / Capitol - F2723 / Recorded 5th December 1953 / Released February 1954 (2:46)
10. **ULTRA DELUXE** (*Mercer Ellington*) / Capitol - F2723 / Recorded 21st December 1953 / Released February 1954 (2:48)
11. **ISLE OF CAPRI** (*Will Grosz, Jimmy Kennedy*) / Capitol - F2817 / Recorded 26th April 1954 / Released June 1954 (2:21)
12. **BAND CALL** (*Duke Ellington*) / Capitol - F2817 / Recorded 26th April 1954 / Released June 1954 (2:32)
13. **BUNNY HOP MAMBO** (*Ray Anthony, Leonard Auletto*) / Capitol - F2875 / Recorded 26th April 1954 / Released July 1954 (2:31)
14. **IS IT A SIN? (MY LOVING YOU)** (*L. Walter Leopold, Emma Carus, Vincent Bryan*) / Capitol - F2875 / Recorded 30th June 1953 / Released July 1954 (2:55)
15. **SMILE** (*Charlie Chaplin, Geoffrey Parsons, James Phillips*)  
Capitol - F2930 / Recorded 1st September 1954 / Released Oct 1954 (2:38)
16. **IF I GIVE MY HEART TO YOU** (*Jimmy Brewster, Jimmie Crane, Al Jacobs*)  
Capitol - F2930 / Recorded 1st September 1954 / Released Oct 1954 (2:39)
17. **CHILE BOWL** (*Duke Ellington*) / Capitol - F2980 / Recorded 1st September 1954 / Released Nov 1954 (2:42)
18. **TWELFTH STREET RAG - MAMBO** (*Euday Bowman*) / Capitol - F2980 / Recorded 8th October 1954 / Released November 1954 (2:36)
19. **ALL DAY LONG** (*Billy Strayhorn*) / Capitol - F3049 / Recorded 26th April 1954 / Released February 1955 (2:47)
20. **ECHO TANGO** (*Paul Stewart*) / Capitol - F3049 / Recorded 1st September 1954 / Released February 1955 (2:35)
21. **DON'T TOUCH ME** (*Harry Noble*) / Recorded 30th June 1953 (2:55)
22. **HEAR MY PLEA** (*Sam Sleet, Jimmy Brewster*) / Recorded 1st July 1953 (2:55)
23. **WHAT MORE CAN I SAY?** (ALTERNATE TAKE) (*Duke Ellington*) / Recorded 1st July 1953 (2:27)
24. **OH, WELL** (*Luther Henderson*) / Recorded 15th December 1953 (3:34)
25. **CHILE BOWL** (ALTERNATE TAKE) (*Duke Ellington*) / Recorded 15th December 1953 (2:42)
26. **NIGHT TIME** (*Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn*) / Recorded 28th December 1953 (2:16)
27. **HARLEM AIRSHAFT** (ALTERNATE TAKE) (*Duke Ellington*) / Recorded 17th May 1955 (3:55)
28. **SO LONG** (EARLY TAKE) (*Remus Harris, Russ Morgan, Irving Melcher*)  
Up-To-Date Records LP "Studio Series, Volume Eight - 1933-1967" / Recorded 19th May 1955 (2:52)

*Vocals by Jimmy Grissom • Produced by Dave Dexter*





# DUKE ELLINGTON

and his Famous Orchestra

This release comprises the complete singles — and some additional treats — Duke Ellington recorded while under contract to Capitol Records in the mid-1950s.

With the exception of a 12-inch LP released in the UK in 1961 on the World Record Club label which collected a dozen of these sides, no anthology has been created previously which focuses on Ellington's Capitol singles in this way.

This period in Ellington's career is frequently overlooked, the music he made during these years, and the single releases in particular, undervalued.

It is certainly the case that the years 1953 to 1955 were among the most difficult — if not the most difficult — of his career. The going was tough: an endless succession of one-night engagements across the United States in what was left of the ballroom circuit and little commercial success in the record charts which were by then dominated by popular singers.

Ellington signed with Capitol Records in the spring

of 1953 in pursuit of hit records. Ironically, the most popular and durable recording Ellington made at Capitol was an original composition recorded on his very first session for the company on 6 April, 1953: *Satin Doll*.

It was one of the few numbers with which Ellington and his arranging/composing companion Billy Strayhorn directly created during the Capitol era.

Strayhorn's final assignment during this time (he was pursuing his own projects during this period) was an arrangement of Ray Anthony's *Bunny Hop* in mambo style.

This likely caused more than a few raised eyebrows at the time, its style and obvious commercial nature something of a departure for Ellington. Similar numbers such as *Echo Tango* (originally *Tyrolean Tango*) and *Twelfth Street Rag Mambo* were also issued as

singles and were similarly met, in some quarters, with astonishment if not dismay. All

three sides, however, were the result, of Ellington's drive for continuing popular appeal and commercial success, a testament to the mambo craze and the popularity in particular of Perez Prado and his Latin American styled highly danceable music. The switch from Ellington's style of piano playing from the Cubist to Cuban, as it were, was



too much to take for some. One of the great joys of this present collection is Ellington's own piano playing which at times is unrecognizable: his characteristic understated Impressionist style, Monk before Monk, all but disappears and the sides collected here are proof positive that he is more than adept, variously at the mambo groove, cocktail piano (*If I Give My Heart To You*, arranged by Gerald Wilson) and boogie woogie (*Ballin' The Blues*), a keyboard player of astonishing range and facility.

In fact, however, careful listening to and close study of Ellington's *oeuvre* proves that he was always something of a musical chameleon absorbing the colours of the music around him and synthesizing its styles into his own work. Frequently, this would be achieved by his choice of singer with the Orchestra. Featured vocalist during this period who is heard on several of the titles collected here was Jimmy Grissom. Born Obbie Vernal Scott, his mother was a sister of Dan Grissom, vocalist with the Jimmie Lunceford Orchestra. Jimmy therefore took his uncle's surname and went into the music business. A young man in his early twenties who had enjoyed some success previously as a solo artist in the Rhythm and Blues charts, another popular current Ellington doubtless sought to ride.

Some considered Grissom's style somewhat outré but viewed in this context, he was the perfect choice. The

material Grissom was given — represented here by sides such as *Give Me The Right* and *Is It A Sin?* were variously hyperbolic forms of supplication to an indifferent beauty and characteristic of the ballad style of the period. The singer comes into his own as a blues shouter of sorts in the incendiary *Ballin' The Blues*.

The Duke Ellington Orchestra of this period was more than capable of holding its own against the other big bands on the Capitol roster, survivors all of the game of Darwinian weakest-to-the-wall at the end of the big band era such as Stan Kenton, Woody Herman and Harry James. The power and precision of their performance, the evident appetite of superlative instrumentalists such as William 'Cat' Anderson, Ray Nance, Paul Gonsalves and Jimmy Hamilton in ripping up these charts is a joy to listen to.

For an encore to the collected singles, we have a clutch of real rarities from the Capitol era including, rounding out the programme, an alternate take from the very last recording session at Capitol Records, never before released on CD and appropriately enough entitled *So Long...*

Ian Bradley

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DUKE ELLINGTON THE CAPITOL SINGLES PLUS

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# DUKE ELLINGTON

*and his famous Orchestra*

## THE CAPITOL SINGLES PLUS

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|--|--|
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| 3. BALLIN' THE BLUES                       | 18. TWELFTH STREET RAG - MAMBO               |
| 4. NOTHIN', NOTHIN', BABY<br>(WITHOUT YOU) | 19. ALL DAY LONG                             |
| 5. BLUEJEAN BEGUINE                        | 20. ECHO TANGO                               |
| 6. WARM VALLEY                             | 21. DON'T TOUCH ME                           |
| 7. BOO-DAH                                 | 22. HEAR MY PLEA                             |
| 8. GIVE ME THE RIGHT                       | 23. WHAT MORE CAN I SAY?<br>(ALTERNATE TAKE) |
| 9. BLUE MOON                               | 24. OH, WELL                                 |
| 10. ULTRA DELUXE                           | 25. CHILE BOWL<br>(ALTERNATE TAKE)           |
| 11. ISLE OF CAPRI                          | 26. NIGHT TIME                               |
| 12. BAND CALL                              | 27. HARLEM AIRSHAFT<br>(ALTERNATE TAKE)      |
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| 15. SMILE                                  |  |



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