

P-24078, SPECIALLY PricED
TWO-ALBUM SET

The **DUKE ELLINGTON**
CARNEGIE HALL
CONCERTS *December*
1947



MUSICSA

Prestige

Side 1:

1. The New Look (Snibar)
(Billy Strayhorn) 3:44
2. Blue Samba
(Mercer-Ellington) 3:55
3. Triple Play
(Ellington) 6:14
4. Harlem Airtaxi
(Ellington) Robbins Music 3:52
5. Johnny Hodges Medley (6:54)
Wanderlust
(Ellington-Hodges) Amer. Academy of Music
Junior Hop
(Ellington) Robbins
Jeep's Blues
(Ellington-Hodges) Amer. Academy of Music
Squatty Roo
(Johnny Hodges) Amer. Academy of Music
The Mood to Be Wooded
(Ellington-Hodges) Robbins

Side 2:

1. Mella Brava
(Ellington) 4:11
2. Kickapoo Joy Juice
(Ellington) 3:37
3. On a Turquoise Cloud
(Ellington-Brown) 4:11
4. Bakiff
(Chico Galles-Schwartz) 6:17
5. Liberator Suite Part I
(Ellington) 5:48
("I Like the Sunrise")

Side 3:

- Liberator Suite (cont.)
1. Dance #1 (5:09)
 2. Dance #2 (4:09)
 3. Dance #3 (3:56)
 4. Dance #4 (4:14)
 5. Dance #5 (5:25)
 6. Cotton Tail
(Ellington) Robbins 3:24

Side 4:

1. Theme Medley (6:40)
East St. Louis Toodle-oo
(Ellington) Mills
Echoes of Harlem
(Ellington) Amer. Academy of Music
Black and Tan Fantasy
(Miley-Ellington) Mills
Things Ain't What They Used to Be
(M. Ellington-Prescott)
2. Basso Profundo
(Ellington) 3:47
3. New York City Blues
(Ellington) 4:59
4. Clothed Woman
(Ellington) 4:54
5. Trumpets No End (Blue Skies)
(Ellington) 3:43

All selections: ASCAP. Published by Tempo Music, except as indicated.

Recorded in concert at Carnegie Hall, New York City, on December 27, 1947.
(Final selection on Side 4 on December 26.)

Duke Ellington: leader, piano, arranger
Harold Baker: Al Killian, Francis Williams,
Shelton Hemphill - trumpets
Ray Nance - trumpet, violin
Lawrence Brown, Claude Jones - trombones
Tyree Glenn - trombone, vibraphone
Johnny Hodges, Harry Carney, Russell Procope,
Al Sears, Jimmy Hamilton - reeds
Fred Guy - guitar
Oscar Pettiford, Junior Raglin - basses
Sonny Greer - drums
Kay Davis, Al Hibbler - vocals
and Mercer Ellington

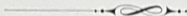
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Albums assembled by Orrin Keepnews.

Art direction - Phil Carroll
Design - Lance Anderson



Out of all Duke Ellington's Carnegie Hall appearances in the 1940s, the concert of December 26, 1947, was surely the most poorly attended. The reason was not a lapse in Ellington's popularity; on the contrary, by 1947 the growing Ellington audience in New York demanded two Carnegie appearances on successive evenings, and both nights had sold out readily. But while New York City was sleeping off its 1947 Christmas dinner, the first flakes of a snowstorm settled onto the streets. Twenty-six inches later, the storm stopped.

While the snow fell, the Ellington musicians pressed on with business as usual; like other touring bands, they had crossed the country at all hours in all kinds of weather, and even a stiff storm in the heart of Manhattan seemed a small challenge. The afternoon of the 26th was occupied by a final rehearsal at Nola studios. Then there was a reception for Ellington at a midtown hotel, given by the government of Liberia and presided over by that country's past president and minister to the United States, Charles E. V. King. Liberia had become the composer's latest patron by commissioning the *Liberator Suite* in honor of the country's centennial, which had arrived the preceding July, and the *Suite* was to be the principal event of Ellington's latest concert. But when the reception drew to a close, the musicians found themselves battling water-high drifts in a cables city. They arrived at the Hall chilled and exhausted, to find that their instruments had been brought by hand from Nola through paralyzed streets. There had been no time to bring the band's uniforms, and so the evening's performance saw the Ellingtonians in mufti, as rarely before or since. Worst of all, the trying conditions affected the band's performance. The music heard by the few hardy Ellington fans who managed to attend, and taken down by Carnegie Hall's recording engineers—who had finished work on Bunk Johnson's last recording session in Carnegie Rectal Hall only hours earlier—was generally ragged and below standard.

But with one exception, that is not the music you will hear on these records. Ellington returned the following night to give an outstanding (and fully uniformed) performance of virtually the same program before a packed house—and fortunately, Carnegie's recording arm was once again at work. (The first evening's performance of "Trumpets No End"—the last number at each concert—is included here only because it was apparently not recorded the next night.)

Each of the concerts included in Prestige's Ellington Carnegie Hall series is unique, of course, in preserving more or less improvised performances of more or less familiar pieces. Most of these concerts also included Ellingtons that never got as far as an "official" studio recording, let alone an American release. This record features four such works, apparently otherwise never recorded at all: in a studio, "live," from a broadcast, or a transcription service, legitimately or illegitimately or in any other way whatsoever. And even the best-known pieces here are performed by a long-standing Ellington lineup that was able to leave few other recordings of its work.

Briefly, that lineup divided itself into three basic groups. First there were the ancient veterans, all of them stars with large allotments of solo space—Johnny Hodges, Lawrence Brown, Harry Carney, Sonny Greer. Then there were the additions of the early and middle 1940s: Ray Nance, a quadruple threat as trumpeter, violinist, singer, and stage personality; the experienced lead trumpeter "Soul" Hemphill; Claude Jones, Juan Tizol's replacement as "straight" trombonist; Jimmy Hamilton and Al Sears, frequently featured on clarinet and tenor saxophone respectively; and Oscar Pettiford. ("Shorty" Baker, in and out of the band a couple of times before joining for a six-year stay in 1946, might also be counted in this group.) Finally, there were the new men. With the exception of trombonist (and occasional vibraphonist) Tyree Glenn, who had inherited Joe Nanton's plunger role, the newcomers had as yet no prominent individual functions—nor even Russell Procope, later so important as a clarinetist, let alone Franc Williams or "Junior" Raglin (Ellington's only bassist in the four years after Jimmy Blanton's departure, now briefly rejoining the band as part of one of the last Duca attempts at a two-bass rhythm section) or high-note specialist Al Killian, the newest of all.

This Ellington group, along with all other unionized instrumentalists, was poised on the edge of a year-long "recording ban"—a strike called for 1948 by officials of the American Federation of Musicians (the AFM's second such contribution to musical history in our time). Several factors besides the strike, including bouts of illness, conspired to keep Ellington out of the recording studios until September of 1949. At that time nearly all his important sidemen of December 1947 were still in their places—though the team of bassists had gone, replaced by Wendell Marshall, and Al Sears had been succeeded by Jimmy Forrest. But even that band did little recording before the major personnel changes of 1950-51, which swept the old guard of Hodges, Brown, and Greer out (along with old-style player Glenn) while bringing in the first large group of Ellingtonian modernists (Paul Gonzales, Clark Terry, Louis Bellson, the returning "Cat" Anderson)—all within a matter of months. By whatever coincidence, the same months also saw the composition of *Harlem*, Ellington's last extended-form work for some years. Thus it appears that the late 1940s marked the end of a broad phase in Ellington's career, and the composer's light recording schedule in those years lends additional value to the few records (such as this one) that document the transition. But for the Carnegie Hall audience of December 1947, any premonitions of the closing of a musical period were probably washed away by a full evening of tried and untried Ellington.

And a full evening it was—so full, in fact, that if this reissue presented it in its complete form, it would run nearly to three LPs—even without such nonmusical additions as a presentation speech to Ellington by Mr. King of Liberia. Accordingly—and according to several different criteria—a number of pieces have had to be dropped. For the record, here are the missing items:

"Midriff," a reworking of the earlier "Raincheck" to feature Lawrence Brown's trombone. Another version of this is included in the December 1944 Carnegie Hall concert reissue, Prestige P-24073.

"He Makes Me Believe," sung by Dolores Parker after a brief introduction by Brown. This was one of many songs

from the Ellington/John LaTouche musical, "Beggar's Holiday."

An untitled and otherwise unrecorded piece by Billy Strayhorn, written to feature French horn, flute, and piano by three student musicians—Paul Rudolph, Elaine Jones, and Warren Ross—who had just been awarded Ellington scholarships to the Juilliard School of Music.

"Stomp, Look and Gladden" (recorded some weeks earlier as "Stomp, Look and Listen"), a medium-tempo swinger featuring Jimmy Hamilton on clarinet and Ray Nance and Harold Baker on trumpets.

"Rockin' In Rhythm," rather poorly performed, featuring Ellington, Tyree Glenn on trombone, Nance on trumpet, and Harry Carney on clarinet.

"On the Sunny Side of the Street," a solo feature for Johnny Hodges on alto and Lawrence Brown. This was very well played, and omitted only with great reluctance from the crowded set.

A series of features for singer Al Hibbler, an Ellington regular from 1943 through 1951—but something of an acquired taste. These included: "It's Monday Every Day"; "Love Come Back to Me" (with a short Hodges intro and a trumpet bridge à la Gillespie by Harold Baker); "Don't Take Your Love from Me" (with an obligato Ray Nance's violin); and "It Don't Mean a Thing" (with scating and straight singing from Hibbler in his best Cab Calloway fashion, followed by Glenn on trombone, Nance on violin, Harold Baker or Franc Williams on trumpet, and Al Sears on tenor).

The inevitable medley of Ellington hits. At this period, the medley was done not by the various soloists, but as a series of exchanges between the full ensemble (blandly scored) and Ellington's piano. "Do Nothin' 'Til You Hear from Me," "In a Sentimental Mood," "Mood Indigo" (in the original trio voicing), "I'm Beginning to See the Light," "Sophisticated Lady," "Caravan," "Solitude," "Let a Song Go Out of My Heart," "Don't Get Around Much Anymore"—all done much better elsewhere.

Finally, we have omitted "Tulpur or Turnip," a Nance vocal novelty with a Brown trombone spot.

Leading off the selections that are included is "The New Look," named after the ladies' fashion catchphrase of the 1940s. When this hip-switching piece finally had a studio recording in September 1949, its name had been changed to "Snibor," a reversed near-anagram for Ellington's music publisher; but that version only appeared in France, and on a much later LP. As "Snibor," it lacked "The New Look's" elaborate introduction, and added an obligato (trumpet at first, clarinet in later recordings) in the last chorus. The Johnny Hodges solo and the trumpet spot (here by Ray Nance) are common to all versions, whatever their date.

This "Blue Serge" slightly expands on the studio classic by allotting more space to the tenor saxophone. The original roles of Rex Stewart (trumpet theme), Joe Nanton (trombone), and Ben Webster (tenor) are respectively taken by Baker, Glenn, and Sears. Only comparison with the Victor original of this Mercer Ellington composition reveals that the "ensembles" were sometimes more improvisatory than the solos—just one among many examples of a skillful Ellington illusion.

"Triple Play" is the first (and least) of this collection's previously unreleased Ellingtonia and is frankly included only because of its rarity. A mislabeled Strayhorn blues for Hodges, Carney, and Brown, "Triple Play" suffers from crude writing for baritone in its early counterpart, and the reading as a whole is stiff until the more relaxed solos arrive. Even then, the change of mood between the Hodges and Brown choruses is jarring, and the abrupt Hollywood production ending (to borrow a phrase from Charles Mingus) suggests a desperate attempt at a last-minute save.

With Ray Nance in the band, "Shorty" Baker's assumption of the Cootie Williams role in "Harlem Airshaft" comes as a surprise. In fact, Ellington actually expanded

Baker's trumpet part, giving it the space allotted Barney Bigard's clarinet in the original recording. Perhaps the composer, always a man of the moment as well as an exponent of tradition, intended to update his pre-war piece to reflect the post-war Harlem, where an airshaft might well carry echoes of a Dizzy Gillespie record.

Johnny Hodges, almost unchallenged as Ellington's *prima* since Cootie Williams's departure in 1940, follows with a grand, sweeping melody of his past successes—mostly small-group recordings from the late 1930s, such as the lovely and neglected "Junior Hop," but also the gently swaying full-band "Mood to Be Woed" from 1945. Pettiford's bass is particularly noticeable in the "Jeep Is Jumpin'"/"Squatty Roo" section.

"Mella Brava," a blues for Harry Carney in several tempos and moods, continues the portion of the program dedicated to concert for individual Ellingtonians. Like "Triple Play," this new had a studio recording; nor did the succeeding "Kickapoo Joy Juice," a showcase for Jimmy



Hamilton's clarinet. Like its namesake—a recurring plot point in the Al Hober comic strip for decades—portions of "Kickapoo" may make you shimmy like your sister Kate. Those who can listen while shimmying may note resemblances between the giddy modulations of "Kickapoo" and Eddie Sauter's 1940-41 features for Benny Goodman—"Benny Rides Again," "Superman," and especially "Clarinet à la King."

"On a Turquoise Cloud," recorded only days before its Carnegie Hall debut, was the latest and most elaborate in Ellington's series of wordless vocal features for Kay Davis. Her soprano blends with Hamilton and muted Brown; then Brown enters alone on a startling "attackless" note, and clarinet and voice recapitulate the trombone's opening phrases before spreading into independent lines against trombone, Carney's bass clarinet, and Nance's violin.

"Bakliff" is a mastery feature for Ray Nance's violin, driven by the brass of bases; there is also a secondary trombone part for Lawrence Brown. Ellington frequently played this somber piece for over a decade before it received a studio recording for Capitol in September 1954. The *Liberian Suite* begins with "I Like the Sun" (featuring Al Hibbler's only feature on these sides. The succeeding unnumbered "dances" make up one of the lesser Ellington extended works. Dances One and Three are the best of the five; respectively, they feature Sears in a dramatic series of

ascending sequences; and Nance's violin in a swooning tango. The second dance (up-tempo, for Hamilton on clarinet and Glenn on vibraphone) seems perfunctory by comparison; the fourth dance (for Sonny Greer's tympani) is even more so; and the concluding movement (for Carney, Nance on trumpet, and Glenn on trombone—and employing a riff that Ellington would re-use in the *Far East Suite's* "Ad Lib on Hippon") ends without tying the preceding movements together, as if one of Ellington's famous deadlines had crept up on him unawares, demanding that an abrupt ending be written at once.

"Cotton Tail" has brief moments for Ellington and Carney, but the focus is on tenor by Al Sears. Sears of ten suffered by comparison with the expressive subtlety of Ben Webster, but this version of a Webster specialty has its own value; though hardly Webster's equal, Sears creates his own worthwhile (and faintly baritonish) solo here. Another new and interesting point of this "Cotton Tail" is the gradual hushing of the saxophones as they run through their famous chorus.

Ray Nance is the central figure in a medley of themes from Ellington's "jungle band" days. After "East St. Louis, Toodle-oo," the piano's bass figure from "Echoes of Harlem" introduces and accompanies "Black and Tan Fantasy"; then "Echoes" returns in complete form until suddenly interrupted by Brown's trombone, leading a brash "Things Ain't What They Used to Be."

"Basso Profundo" is naturally for Pettiford and Raglin, in duets and rapid chase choruses. They are musically much of a mind; in fact, at many points in this collaboration I would venture to guess who is which. The next two pieces featured Ellington himself. Ellington recorded both a few days later (they were his last recordings before the 1948 AFM ban), but not with the full band as here; instead, he used a handful of horns to sketch what the entire orchestra stated in full. Besides the pianist, the lush "New York City Blues" features Hodges and Baker briefly. (No, it's not a twelve-bar blues.) "The Clothed Woman" is perhaps the most remarkable of all Ellington's piano features, a teetering on the brink of atonality that suggests an awareness of Thelonious Monk's emerging blues primitivism, while casting an affectionate backward look at his own early "sophisticated" stride style. (This quasi-stride theme, by the way, is not recapitulated by the horns in the studio version.)

Finally (or previously; we have already noted that this selection comes from the first of the pair of concert) there is "Trumpets No End," the durable Mary Lou Williams "Blue Skies" contrafact that features the Ellington trumpets. Since Hemphill and Williams got so little solo space with Ellington, the order of the brief solos here is not easy to determine. But the most confident high-note passages are surely the work of newcomer Al Killian.

In his autobiographical *Music Is My Mistress* (Doubleday), Ellington ended his discussion of his Carnegie Hall concerts of the 1940s as follows: "By 1950 everybody was giving concerts, and even a concert at Carnegie Hall no longer had the same prestige value that it had in 1945, but our series there had helped establish a music that was new both in its extended forms and its social significance." To look at it in another way, Ellington's genius—in and out of concert, in and out of "extended forms"—brought everybody in his musical neighborhood into a new light, requiring new interpretations which in turn called for new contexts. Thus by 1950 everybody was giving concerts, leaving Ellington free to work at or above the "prestige value" of Carnegie Hall—which was after all only fair. The music then records, like each of the other 1940s Carnegie recordings, tells part of the story of how all this came about. And if that story hasn't got "social significance," I can't imagine what does.

J. R. Taylor



DUKE ELLINGTON
CARNEGIE HALL CONCERT (December 1947)

P-24075/A

Face 1



1. THE NEW LOOK (SNIBOR) (Billy Strayhorn) 3'44
2. BLUE SERGE (Mercer Ellington) 3'55
3. TRIPLE PLAY (Duke Ellington) 6'14
4. HARLEM AIRSHAFT (Duke Ellington) 3'52
5. JOHNNY HODGES MEDLEY - 6'54
 1. WANDERLUST (Ellington - Hodges)
 2. JUNIOR HOP (Duke Ellington)
 3. JEEP'S BLUES (Johnny Hodges)
 4. SQUATTY ROO (Johnny Hodges)
 5. THE MOOD TO BE WOODED (Ellington - Hodges)

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DUKE ELLINGTON
CARNEGIE HALL CONCERT (December 1947)

P-24075/B

Face 2



1. MELLA BRAVA (Duke Ellington) 4'11
2. KICKAPOO JOY JUICE (Duke Ellington) 3'57
3. ON A TURQUOISE CLOUD (Ellington - Brown) 4'11
4. BAKIFF (Tizol - Gallet - Schwartz) 6'17
5. LIBERIAN SUITE, part 1 (Duke Ellington)
I LIKE THE SUNRISE - 6'48

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Prestige

DUKE ELLINGTON
CARNEGIE HALL CONCERT (December 1947)

P-24075/C

Face 3



LIBERIAN SUITE (Cont) (Duke Ellington)

- | | |
|------------|------|
| 1. DANCE 1 | 5'09 |
| 2. DANCE 2 | 4'09 |
| 3. DANCE 3 | 3'50 |
| 4. DANCE 4 | 4'16 |
| 5. DANCE 5 | 5'25 |

6. COTTON TAIL (Duke Ellington) 3'24

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Prestige

DUKE ELLINGTON
CARNEGIE HALL CONCERT (December 1947)

P-24075/D

Face 4



1. THEME MEDLEY - 6'40

1. EAST ST. LOUIS TOODLE-OO
(Duke Ellington)
2. ECHOES OF HARLEM (Duke Ellington)
3. BLACK AND TAN FANTASY (Miley - Ellington)
4. THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE
(Ellington - Persons)

2. BASSO PROFUNDO (Duke Ellington) 3'47

3. NEW-YORK CITY BLUES (Duke Ellington) 4'59

4. CLOTHED WOMAN (Duke Ellington) 4'54

5. TRUMPETS NO END (Blue Skies)

(Duke Ellington) 3'43

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Duke Ellington and His Orchestra

CARNEGIE HALL CONCERT, DECEMBER 27, 1947

with (in alphabetical order)

Harold Baker
Lawrence Brown
Harry Carney
Kay Davis
Tyree Glenn
Sonny Greer
Fred Guy
Al Killian
Jimmy Hamilton
Shelton Hemphill
Al Hibbler
Johnny Hodges
Claude Jones
Ray Nance
Oscar Pettiford
Russell Procope
Junior Raglin
Al Sears
Francis Williams

The New Look (Snibor)
Blue Serge
Triple Play
Harlem Airshaft
A Johnny Hodges Medley
(Wanderlust,
Junior Hop,
Jeep's Blues;
Jeep Is Jumpin';
Squatty Roo,
The Mood to Be Wooped)
Mello Brava
Kickapoo Joy Juice
On a Turquoise Cloud
Bakitt
Liberian Suite
Cotton Tail
Theme Medley
(East St. Louis Toodle-oo,
Echoes of Harlem,
Black and Tan Fantasy;
Things Ain't What They Used to Be)
Basso Profundo
New York City Blues
The Clothed Woman
Trumpets No End (Blue Skies)

Notes by J.R. Taylor

The late-1947 version of Ellington-at-Carnegie (actually there were, for the first time, identical concerts on consecutive nights). The featured extended work was the *Liberian Suite*, and the program also happened to include an intriguing number of compositions the orchestra seldom performed and/or never recorded.

The Blue Note Records Collection of Carnegie Hall Concerts
January 1942, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 1947
November 1944, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 1947
December 1947, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 1947



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