



# DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

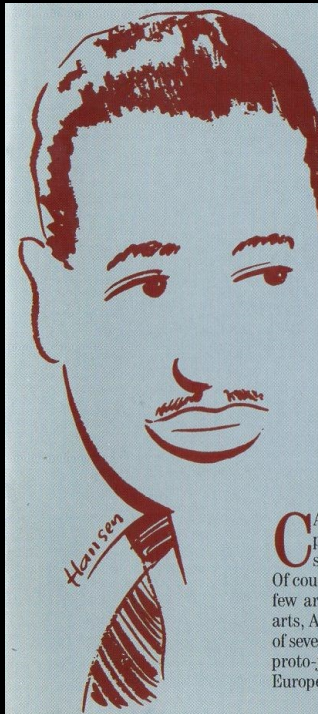


CARNEGIE HALL,  
NOVEMBER 13, 1948

*Starring*

BEN WHEATSTER • JOHNNY HODGES • AL HIBBER





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## CARNEGIE HALL, NOVEMBER 13, 1948

CARNEGIE HALL, THE MOST venerable and hallowed platform for musical arts in America, has served jazz surprisingly well since its construction in 1891. Of course, it is the New York venue of which we speak since few are aware that the philanthropist and patron of the arts, Andrew Carnegie, was responsible for the endowment of several so-named American music halls. As early as 1912, proto-jazz composer and musical director James Reese Europe organized concerts at Carnegie Hall for his associa-

tion of Black musicians, the Clef Club. Other milestone concerts included the 1928 tribute to W.C. Handy, John Hammond's famous "From Spirituals To Swing" concert of 1938, Norman Granz's "Jazz at the Philharmonic" from 1948 to 1953, Miles Davis with the Gil Evans Orchestra in 1961, and the "Charles Mingus with Friends" concert in 1974. Of course, there have been numerous other important jazz concerts at Carnegie Hall; these few examples only serve to illustrate the richness of America's greatest art form as heard on that stage.

When Ellington and his orchestra played the music heard on this recording, they were on familiar territory as this was the sixth and last of the official annual series of concerts produced by the Duke himself. On January 23, 1943, Ellington gave the first of his Carnegie Hall concerts which established the precedent of premiering a major, extended composition—in this case, the monumental *Black, Brown and Beige*. Yet even before 1943, Ellingtonia had been heard at Carnegie Hall by virtue of Paul Whiteman's "Eighth Experiment in Modern Music" concert on December 25, 1938, which featured six commissioned works from American composers on the theme of bells; Ellington's contribution was *The Blue Belles of Harlem*. And previously, at Benny Goodman's Carnegie Hall concert of January 16, 1938, some of Duke's most distinguished sidemen—Cootie Williams, Harry Carney, and Johnny Hodges—were heard in a few selections including Ellington's "Blue Roverie."

1948 seems to be one of the leanest years in the Ellington discography. After his fifth official Carnegie Hall concert of December 27, 1947, and four pieces recorded for Columbia a few days later, very little of Ellington's activity was documented until the music on this album was captured almost a year later. The greatest reason for the paucity of recordings was a second major American Federation of Musicians union strike which lasted from January 1 to December 14, 1948. As well, the production of radio transcriptions and V-Discs for American servicemen was in decline and about to be discontinued. Nevertheless, Duke kept his musicians busy. From the first of January to the tenth of June 1948, Ellington and his orchestra played theatrical engagements and dance dates radiating from New

York to Chicago, Louisville, Hartford and Washington. Coincidentally this also included a turn at Carnegie Hall on April 13, to participate with several other artists in a concert for the Booker T. Washington Memorial Fund.

On June 11, Duke, Ray Nance and Kay Davis, along with Pearl Bailey, boarded the ship RMS *Media* for a nine-day cruise to England. Since the British Musician's Union had passed a protectionist ban on foreign dance bands, Ellington was able to appear only as a variety performer accompanied by British musicians for appearances at the London Palladium and other such halls, including those inournemouth, Manchester, and as far north as Glasgow, Scotland. After a side tour to Paris—July 20-23—the small entourage returned to the United States, presumably by the end of the month.

Little is known about Ellington's subsequent activities until an appearance at the Verdun Auditorium on the outskirts of Montreal on August 25. From there, the orchestra continued to play dance dates ranging from Connecticut to New York to Pennsylvania to Indiana and arriving at the unlikely place of Aberdeen, South Dakota, on October 8. Something in the Bread Basket region must have impressed or inspired Ellington since he wrote several new compositions variously titled "Omaha," "Aberdeen," and rather cryptically, "Kitchen Stove." Duke then played a residency at Detroit's Paradise Theater from October 15 to 21. Whether or not the new music was in the book is not known at this time. However, as we shall see, these pieces were amalgamated into one work which would become the centerpiece of Duke's forthcoming Carnegie Hall concert.

Ellington's exact activities are not clear over the next three weeks (from October 22nd to November 11th), however, he is known to have made some major personnel changes. Some sources contend that on October 22, Quentin "Butter" Jackson joined on trombone to replace Claude Jones. Wendell Marshall later recalled joining the orchestra on November 3rd, and that Johnny Hodges helped him keep place in the music when the bassist wrestled with Ellington's new scores at Carnegie. Marshall, who replaced Junior Raglin, was playing on his cousin Jimmy Blanton's bass.

But the most significant personnel addition occurred im-



In the excitement of a pre-concert appearance Duke is ever calm.

mediately prior to the Carnegie concert: Ben Webster rejoined the saxophone section, swelling its ranks to six members. From the first to the tenth of November, the band played the Duke Ellington club in Washington, D.C. Jack Towers, who had befriended Webster while recording the band at the famous dance date in Fargo, North Dakota, eight years earlier (released in its entirety by Vintage Jazz Classics as VJC-1019/20-2), remembers that Webster did not join the orchestra until after the Washington engagement. According to Jack, Webster officially rejoined the orchestra when they returned to New York on November 11. Ellington and the orchestra then spent two days preparing for this eminent concert.

"Saturday Evening, November 13th, at 8:30 o'clock," reads the Carnegie Hall program. With Duke Ellington at the piano, the orchestra at this time consisted of:

**Saxophones:**

Johnny Hodges, Ben Webster, Al Sears, Jimmy Hamilton,

Harry Carney. *Russell Procope is not listed in the program.*

**Trombones:**

Lawrence Brown, Tyree Glenn, Quentin (sic) Jackson.

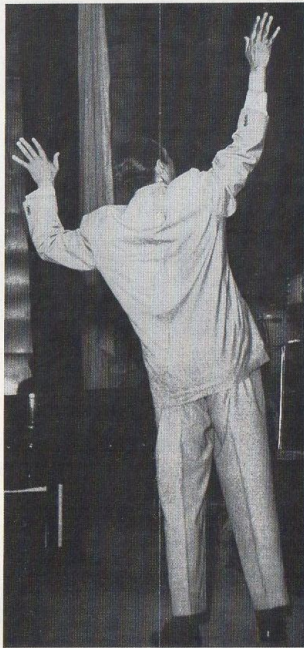
**Trumpets:**

Al Killian, Ray Nance, Shelton Hemphill, Harold Baker, Francis Williams.

Sonny Greer—drums, Freddy Guy—guitar, Wendell Marshall—string bass.

Kay Davis, Albert Hibbler—vocalists.

The music played that evening consisted mainly of recent compositions, some expected premiere performances—especially an extended work or two—and also, a comprehensive medley of Ellington's most popular and famous pieces. It seems every new piece heard here got at least a second chance as the entire program was repeated at a concert presented by The Cornell Rhythm Club at Bailey Hall, Cornell University on December 10.



## DISC ONE [VJC-1024-2]:

### FIRST HALF:

#### 1-1. Three Cent Stomp (3:21)

[Duke Ellington]

Besides missing Duke's respectable arrangement of the national anthem, this recording begins a few bars into the opening chorus of **Three Cent Stomp**. Premiered at the Hurricane Club in New York during April of 1943—the time of the most famous recording ban—Duke was not able to record the piece officially until November 10, 1947, when he did two takes for Columbia. Taken at a faster tempo than the recorded version, solo statements are heard from Harold Baker, Ray Nance, Wendell Marshall, and Al Killian. Marshall seems uncomfortable here, but he would give a superior performance at the Hollywood Empire in February, 1949. Because Duke was not restricted by recording time, he was able to perform everything he originally composed including a chorus featuring Jimmy Hamilton on tenor, and a ride-out over the final ensemble by Killian.

Harmonically, **Three Cent Stomp** is based on the last section of William H. Tyler's "Panama," a progression favored by jazz musicians of the 1920s and early '30s almost as much as that of "Tiger Rag." Duke had previously written at least two themes (both on the VJC *Pierro* set), based on this old progression and titled them "Stomp Jones" and "The Flaming Sword." [One could construct a swinging montage by joining all three of these joyful Ellington pieces together.]

End of theme—saxes

Interlude

Harold Baker—16 bars

Tyre Glenn, trb—16 bars

Interlude—trbison

Ray Nance

Wendell Marshall, bass

"Rhythmic" bridge—Al Killian

Sax chorus à la Cottontail

Full ensemble

Interlude

Jimmy Hamilton's frog-throated

tenor sax solo

Full ensemble—Al Killian/

Jimmy Hamilton

Coda

There are at least 28 documented performances of **Three Cent Stomp** from April 20, 1943, to the February 1949 residency at the Hollywood Empire club—after which it seems never to have been played again (except when Mercer Ellington re-recorded it digitally in 1987 as "22 Cent

Stomp"). Perhaps Duke decided to boycott this philatelist tribute in protest to the rising cost of postage. [Producer's Note: this is in accordance with the Chinese stamp collector's proverb, "Philately will get you nowhere.]"

#### 1-2. Lady of the Lavender Mist (3:53)

[Duke Ellington]

When asked by Duke to choose fifty of their favorite titles from his Tempo catalog, Stanley Dance, Mercer Ellington and Duke's nephews Michael and Stephen James came up with a dozen common choices. **Lady of the Lavender Mist** was among them. Premiered on August 14, 1947, at Columbia studios—four takes were recorded—this version follows the form of the original recording. With Jimmy Hamilton playing the responses, five saxes play the richly voiced theme of A1; a trombone line develops the repeat—A2; Hamilton and Carney share the melody on the bridge; not content with a simple repeat, Duke voices the theme for the full ensemble—A3; Lawrence Brown takes the bridge; the reeds take the tune out—A1 is first subtly altered by Hamilton playing harmony above saxes and then repeated as originally stated.

#### 1-3. Suddenly It Jumped (2:37)

[Duke Ellington]

**Suddenly It Jumped** is superficially cast in a very simple AABA form. However, Duke throws us several musical knuckleballs such as a 6-bar scored introduction, a slippery first theme (musical analysts call this technique "hemiola") introduced on piano and later scored for saxes, and a second theme (first heard on the bridge) which hints at the famous introduction to "Just Squeeze Me"—this is later stirred into the A section. Harold Baker is the prominent jumper. Jimmy Hamilton slides in a few sudden licks. Duke had first presented **Suddenly It Jumped** to his audience at the Hurricane Club in April, 1944. Victor recorded the piece on July 9, 1946, and it remained in the book until the Summer of 1950.

#### 1-4. Reminiscing in Tempo (12:04)

[Duke Ellington]

When Duke's mother died on May 27, 1935, Ellington lost the woman he loved most in his life. "I have no ambi-

tion left," he is reported to have said. "When Mother was alive, I had something to fight for. . . Now what? I can see nothing. The bottom's out of everything." Duke tried to express his grief in a new work which he recorded on September 12 which required four sides of wax. Speaking of this new extended work, **Reminiscing in Tempo**, Duke said: "It was written in a soliloquizing mood. It begins with pleasant thoughts. Then something gets you down. Then you snap out of it, and it ends affirmatively."

Around the time of the tenth anniversary of his mother's death, on July 21, 1945, Ellington revived **Reminiscing in Tempo**, but with some revisions. A section of approximately 38 measures featuring Barney Bigard was replaced with 65 bars of new music featuring trumpet and trombone solos, Harry Carney, the trombone trio, and the full ensemble. However, **Reminiscing** appears not to have been played again until this concert. When he re-introduced it at Carnegie '48, Duke further explains that it "was written originally from the perspective of one who looks back over things that happened at some specific period. And, of course, sometimes they are very, very pleasant, and then again they become just a little ugly in spots. But, however, the tempo continues the same, and so, the person has to try to just keep time with the music." [Also, it should be mentioned that it is probably Quentin Jackson in this piece playing Juan Tizol's part on valve trombone.]

One critic has recently described **Reminiscing in Tempo** as being "one of Ellington's greatest master strokes." Rather, it seems to be a maudlin piece dripping in self-pity. Running on for over twelve minutes at an unchanging *fox trot* tempo, Ellington works over just two scant motifs. In a sense he anticipated the fashion of Minimalism fostered by Classical composers Phillip Glass and Steve Reich.

Harmonically the entire work is based on the I-vi-ii-V-I formula whereby the few departures prove its monotony. Rhythmically it is non-swinging either in its tempo, beat or in the way Duke often asks the orchestra to interpret strings of eighth notes in an even, classical subdivision. There are practically no solos. The orchestration seems drab despite the use of clarinets, bass clarinet and muted brass. The usual Ducal trait of promoting the individuality of the

instrumentalists seems suppressed. In a rare lapse of taste, Sonny Greer's thundering tympani accomplishes little. Reviewed from the perspective of Ellington's total oeuvre, **Reminiscing in Tempo** comes nowhere near the explorative but flawed near-masterpiece *Creole Rhapsody* (1931) or the later monumental *Black, Brown and Beige* (1943). **Reminiscing in Tempo** does not sparkle with the brilliancy of *The Tattooed Bride*, *Harlem*, *Idiom* 59, or even the a-thematic but cohesive collection of dances recorded as *The Fur East Suite*.

Finally, one wonders what compelled Ellington to resurrect this piece from 1935. The musical style of **Reminiscing in Tempo** is of its time and not about it. And while even a failed piece by a major composer can be instructive, it further seems that Duke was remiss in trying to revive **Reminiscing in Tempo** with an orchestra poised on the vanguard of late-Forties jazz style. Said Johnny Hodges, upon giving his notice to Ellington in 1950, "We didn't like the tone poems too much."

#### 1-5. She Wouldn't Be Moved (4:59)

[Mercer Ellington & Luther Henderson]

Duke's son, with the help of an experienced and expert arranger, wrote this charming gospel-styled piece reminiscent of Erskine Hawkins's "Tuxedo Junction." As this piece was brand new the solos seem tentative; Duke couldn't remember its title. Hodges, Hamilton, Tyree Glenn, Harold Baker and Wendell Marshall each get a turn. But latch on to Sonny Greer's brush work! This is yet another example of the much maligned drummer's great skill and rhythmic artistry. According to the discographers, **She Wouldn't Be Moved** was repeated at the Cornell concert on December 10 and never played again.

#### The Symphoniac

[Billy Strayhorn & Duke Ellington]

#### 1-6. Symphonic or Bust (5:18)

The first section of the conglomeration, **Symphonic or Bust**, never earned more than three or four documented performances. As Ellington scholar Sief Hoefsmit has noted, there are references to previous and forthcoming compositions. They are: the introduction to *The Eighth Veil*,

the second theme of *Princess Blue*, the introduction to the aforementioned *Blue Belles of Harlem*. After a symphonical introduction, Ellington plays a charmingly tossed-off stride-piano solo on the blues. An orchestral interlude with a Latin tinge sets up the beautiful *Princess Blue* theme—done here as a piano solo. Next, a carillon-voiced ensemble leads Duke into some boogie-woogie, which he soon abandons in favor of some more stride. Finally, a rather pretentious orchestral passage resolves into a bombastic finale. An educated guess suggests that Strayhorn wrote the orchestral parts while Duke provided the piano themes.

#### 1-7. How You Sound (3:48)

The second section, **How You Sound**, was played more frequently as an independent piece going up to the time when the band left its residency at the Hollywood Empire in February 1949. According to the Tempo catalog, this piece is pure Ellington. Soloists Ray Nance and Jimmy Hamilton explore the boppish direction of **How You Sound**.

#### 1-8. My Friend (5:58)

[Duke Ellington]

Based on the spiritual-like "Saturday Night Function," which Duke composed in 1929, Al Sears is given the feature role as soloist on this selection. Duke can be heard clapping on 2 and 4 in response to Sears's and the band's soulful performance. This is another of the pieces premiered that evening which were never given a chance to develop and be recorded in a studio. Sears left the band shortly after this, at which point **My Friend**, virtually a "Soliloquy For Sears," was dropped from the book.

#### 1-9. Tootin' Through the Roof (3:41)

[Duke Ellington]

First recorded on October 14, 1939, **Tootin' Through the Roof** became something of a test piece for Ellington's trumpeters. After some difficulties establishing the tempo, the tootin' begins in earnest. Duke acknowledges soloists Al Killian and Harold Baker. However, improvised passages were also provided by Ray Nance (plungered growling on the first bridge), Jimmy Hamilton and Lawrence Brown.

#### 1-10. Creole Love Call (4:03)

[Duke Ellington]

Kay Davis essentially joined the orchestra in December 1944 as a wordless vocalist. Among her specialties were the pieces Duke wrote especially for her classically-trained voice: "Translucency," "On a Turquoise Cloud," "Minnehaha," a few of Ellington's older pieces: **Creole Love Call** and "Mood Indigo"; and background humming on several other pieces. Kay Davis first sang **Creole Love Call** at Carnegie Hall on December 19, 1944. In fact, this venerable and innovative piece had not been done with the voiceless response and solo since Adelaide Hall first recorded it on October 26, 1927. **Creole Love Call** remained in Ms. Davis's repertoire until she left Duke shortly after his European tour in the Spring of 1950. Her official recording was waxed for Columbia on September 1, 1949. According to a *Down Beat* review of the concert, Kay Davis sang her responses to the famous clarinet trio theme from the wings off-stage. Ray Nance plays the trumpet solo which departs from the routine established by predecessors Bubber Miley and Cootie Williams. Curiously, Duke doesn't reprise the theme in this performance.

#### 1-11. Don't Blame Me (2:37)

[Jimmy McHugh & Dorothy Fields]

With Ray Nance joining Kay Davis and the Duke on a seemingly impromptu version of **Don't Blame Me** (a standard later associated in jazz with Thelonious Monk), we may be hearing a sample of what this trio did when they appeared in England and France as variety performers.

#### 1-12. Paradise (5:30)

[Billy Strayhorn]

The name of this composition may have simply been a working title inspired by the Paradise Theater in Detroit where the orchestra had recently worked a full week's residency (October 15-21). **Paradise** is virtually a concerto for the majestic Harry Carney. Premiered at this concert, it was unfortunately never recorded in a studio or for a major record company. **Paradise** was never played again once the band returned from their trip to Europe in the Spring of 1950.

#### 1-13. The Tattooed Bride (12:19)

[Duke Ellington]

Certainly the diamond in the rough amongst the other gems on this recording, **The Tattooed Bride** was also premiered at this Carnegie Hall concert. After that, it was performed fairly often until July of 1954. As an extended work, it warrants serious attention for its thematic unity as well as its decidedly modern quality. Surprisingly, it seems as though this striking piece was originally three separate compositions Duke wrote when touring the previous Fall. Instrumental parts for Harry Carney found in the Ellington Archives of The Smithsonian Institution labeled "Kitchen Store," "Omaha," and "Aberdeen" are in fact the various portions of **The Tattooed Bride**.

Elsewhere, Duke said there were several stories about **The Tattooed Bride**. One of these concerns the "W" — a four-stroke letter corresponding to the four notes of the main theme which is developed and rhapsodized for ten minutes. Jimmy Hamilton is the main soloist, with considerable space given over to Lawrence Brown and a brief solo by Harold Baker to introduce the slow section.

Overall, the macro-form is based on the tempo changes fast/slow/fast. As this was a new and particularly difficult piece there are a number of performance errors — mainly insecure or late entries in the introduction and the first section. Perhaps the definitive version was that done at the Hollywood Empire a few months later. The official version was recorded in the Columbia studios on December 19, 1950. Nevertheless, this performance holds more than historic value: a certain fervor which attests most premiere performances is apparent in this rendition.

For this concert, jazz critic Leonard Feather provided a three-page insert of notes on some of the compositions played that evening. Regarding **The Tattooed Bride**, Feather wrote:

"Described by the composer as a musical strip tease, this is one of the most curious pieces of program music ever delineated by the Duke. The story which it tells in music involves a weekend honeymoon spent at a seaside resort by an energetic young man and his bride. The young man apparently expends his energy through the medium of long hikes along the boardwalk, liberal bouts of swimming and other recreational

activities, after which he returns home and goes to sleep exhausted. After three nights of this sort of thing he declares that this is the best vacation he has ever had. At this point we might insert a row of asterisks, which would be the printed equivalent of Jimmy Hamilton's climactic long-held note on the clarinet, indicating that the husband has finally found out that his wife is tattooed.'

Za Zu Zas Zah, indeed!

#### SECOND HALF:

#### 1-14. Manhattan Murals (6:32)

(As seen from Strayhorn's "Take the A Train")  
[Billy Strayhorn & Duke Ellington]

An extended arrangement of Strayhorn's swinging masterpiece, Ellington takes his assistant's theme through a wide variety of moods, tempos and tonalities. Scores preserved in the Smithsonian's archives confirm that Duke scored some of the sections and that Strayhorn did others. Ellington shines in a large portion of the solo space. Ray Nance, Al

Killian and Harry Carney each contribute a few bars. Heard here is an unfinished arrangement which evolved and expanded into the 1950s version featuring Betty Roché—and recorded officially for Columbia on August 10, 1952.

Feather: "Acting Mayor Impellitteri gave a citation from the City of New York to Duke Ellington in recognition of this composition, which was presented, in turn, to the city. As the Duke describes it, this is a visit through the metropolis via Billy Strayhorn's A train."

TOTAL TIME: DISC ONE  
[VJC-1024-2] = 76:47



Ben Webster returns to the Dukedom, and Johnny Hodges breaks away with his own band—but before Hodges departed, this photo was taken at a rehearsal for the Carnegie Hall concert. Left to right are Ellington, Hodges, Harry Carney, Webster, and Jimmy Hamilton. Suspect the expectant look on Duke's face is one of his favorite flash-bulb reflexes.

#### DISC TWO [VJC-1025-2]:

#### 2-1. Lush Life (6:33)

[Billy Strayhorn]

And what of **Lush Life**, considered by many to be Billy Strayhorn's ballad masterpiece? After the extended fantasia on "Take the A Train," Ellington steps to the microphone and announces: "Have a seat there, Mr. Strayhorn. Of course you know Billy Strayhorn wrote our radio theme, 'Take the A Train.' And now the purpose, of course, of him appearing on tonight's program which is a little extra added thought—I should say—is that I'd like for him to play for Kay Davis to introduce a new tune of his called **Lush Life**." Strayhorn then ramps three times to bring in Ms. Davis on the verse followed by the chorus. Then, Strayhorn plays the first eight bars of the verse full of richly voiced chords, and Davis returns to finish the second chorus—the words remain the same. The Ellington orchestra—at least saxes and rhythm—join to support the last chord. After sustained and appreciative applause, Duke announces "Thank you. I don't

know which is better: living a lush life or... singing about it!"

Robert Conaway, Billy's closest childhood friend said in 1984: "On occasion, Ellington would have Billy come up to the stage as a Pittsburgher to play with the band. Billy would play **Lush Life**. He came to Duquesne Gardens down here in Pittsburgh... it was standing then. And so he called Billy Strayhorn to play **Lush Life**, which he had just written. He had a girl singing it. And, of course, the band accompanied on that." (sic)

Barry Ulanov, in his book *Duke Ellington*, published in New York by Creative Age in 1946, related that Strayhorn "wrote lyrics for songs; one that he occasionally still runs over for friends at parties, a sophisticated song in the Noel Coward manner, pretty far removed from Billy's life in the Thirties, but none the less convincing therefore. This song is called **Lush Life**. It was one of several he played for Duke when he got to meet him in December 1938." And yet this tune must have not meant much to Ellington since Ulanov makes a point to say of all of Billy's compositions played

on that occasion, "one particularly impressed Duke, a tune of Billy's called 'Something To Live For.'"

As played at the 1948 concert—the first documented recording—**Lush Life** is a theatrical song to be sung dramatically. It seems as though Strayhorn's lyrics carry the melody. Duke must have also understood the nature of the piece as neither he nor Strayhorn ever arranged **Lush Life** for the Ellington orchestra. Occasionally, Duke invited Strayhorn to perform the song on stage, but it never became an official part of the working repertoire. To add further confusion as to the song's origins, **Lush Life** was not copyrighted until 1949 by Duke's publishing company Tempo Music.

On March 29, 1949, Nat King Cole recorded **Lush Life** in an arrangement written by Pete Rugolo, which became a minor hit and established the song as a pop music standard. Obviously, the Cole/Strayhorn connection was strong—Cole's wife Marie had sung with the Duke in 1944-45. And while Strayhorn had great respect for the brilliant pianist/vocalist, it was said that Billy didn't care for Nat Cole's version. Perhaps the swelled orchestration

including oboes and bongos put off the composer. On June 26, 1957, Ella Fitzgerald evidently recorded **Lush Life** for Verve as part of the Ellington Songbook collection. Unfortunately, this version was never released. Discographers have noted that in the mid-60s, Strayhorn is known to have performed **Lush Life** on several occasions. One of these, a wonderful version sung by the composer, has been preserved via a broadcast recording from Basin Street East. But, unfortunately, these performances are also unreleased. The only known Ellington performance of **Lush Life** was done at a concert in Los Angeles in April 1968, when he alone accompanied Ella Fitzgerald in what must have been a moving tribute to Strayhorn's memory.

Many versions of **Lush Life** have been recorded since 1948; the most famous was by John Coltrane (1958), who used the out of tempo-ness to work through his developing ideas about melody; Ellington and Strayhorn fancier Harry James conceived a considerably more aggressive, yet no less personal, approach to the tune which he recorded in 1953 and 1962. Many vocalists lack the maturity and worldliness to

interpret the song apparently written by a teenager who only got as far as Pittsburgh when he wrote it. His sister Lillian Strayhorn Dicks must have been complaining about

sloppy vocal renditions when she exclaimed: "Instead of 'distant gay places', the words should be 'distingüé traces' meaning gray at the temples."



Duke Ellington and his right-hand man and arranger, Billy "Swee'-pea" Strayhorn. His style of arranging and composing can hardly be distinguished from Ellington's.

While cataloging the music of Charles Mingus, I found an envelope marked "Four monsieur Charles Mingus from Swee' Pea Strayhorn." Inside was a score in Strayhorn's hand of *Lush Life* written for alto sax, two trumpets, trombone, french horn, and tuba. Mingus had worked with a group this size—plus rhythm section—in September 1965 for a performance at the Monterey Jazz Festival. While recordings of this group exist, none document this Strayhorn arrangement. In 1974, Mingus wrote a piece titled "Duke Ellington's Sound of Love" which was recorded both as an instrumental and as a vocal featuring Jackie Paris. Obviously inspired by *Lush Life*, this rich ballad—in the same key of Db—shares much with Strayhorn's composition including the general mood of the lyric and the rising melodic figure and harmonies in the last two bars.

Finally, there exists one sole official version of *Lush Life*. It was recorded

in Paris in May 1961. The album was titled *The Peaceful Side: Billy Strayhorn* (as if he also had a brutal side or a sarcastic side!). It may have been first issued by United Artists and as such was poorly distributed—later the World Record Club in England and Solid State in the United States briefly reissued the album. In a program of ten of his compositions, Strayhorn featured himself on piano, accompanied by bass, string quartet, and a small choir. Another unique aspect of this recording is that it did not include any Ellington musicians—past or present. As Strayhorn wrote the piece, the words determine the rhythm and tempo of the performance—the choir does not sing lyrics, they function to support Strayhorn's piano as does the string quartet. For this performance Strayhorn composed a beautiful introduction, followed by the verse, the chorus, and an extended coda which at first draws material from the introduction. Billy Strayhorn's seemingly laissez-faire attitude toward his problematical composition is perhaps best expressed in his own words: "...*Lush Life*... never had a title, even when the lyrics were written. How I happened to call it *Lush Life* was because that was the line that everybody remembered."

#### 2-2. *Hy'a Sue* (7:29)

[Duke Ellington]

This piece is a throwaway, one of those little ditties that Duke could toss off as easily as an office clerk sends an inter-office memo. Tyree Glenn "Nantons" in tandem with Jimmy Hamilton on tenor sax. Johnny Hodges signifies for a few precious choruses. Ellington instructs the Blues before Hamilton returns to blow nine choruses accompanied by a large catalog of written and improvised riffs. This may well be the most extended solo in an Ellington performance prior to Paul Gonsalves's "Wailing Interlude" set between *Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue*. *Hy'a Sue* remained in the book until the Summer of 1962. A vastly truncated version was recorded for Columbia on October 14, 1947.

#### 2-3. *Fantazm* (5:30)

[Duke Ellington]

This little known piece set in a quasi-latin rhythm and

constructed with slightly moorish melodies, features, in duo concertante, Harry Carney and Lawrence Brown. Alternate spellings of the title range from "Fantazzam" to "Fantazzin'" to "Fantazzamp"—the one used above is taken from Ellington's Tempo Music catalog. Premiered at this concert, we know *Fantazzam* was also played a month later on December 10 at Cornell University. Listening to this recording one is impressed with the precision of the orchestra's interpretation—in particular Carney's tremendous control of the bass clarinet. Brown's flexibility and Greer's effective use of tympani. Yet despite the qualities of this piece, it seems that Duke chose not to play it again. Certainly if researchers don't find other performances of this piece, those who lead jazz orchestras would do well to add *Fantazzam* to their repertoire.

#### 2-4. *You Ought'a* (3:23)

[Duke Ellington]

*You Ought'a* (spelled "Y'Aught'a" in the Tempo catalog) joined the Ellington book for the duration of Al Killian's tragically brief stay with the orchestra (some sources claim that the trumpeter had a hand in writing this piece). Musically aligned to the topgish *How You Sound*, the orchestration is definitely Ellingtonian. Killian brings up images of Roy Eldridge in his melodic ideas and especially of Cat Anderson in his altissimo excursions. Brief improvisations were also provided by Hodges, Brown and Hamilton.

#### 2-5. *Brown Betty* (5:37)

[Duke Ellington & Billy Strayhorn]

When presented superior material, Hodges rose to the occasion as we hear in *Brown Betty*, another virtual concerto co-composed for the master alto saxophonist by Ellington and Billy Strayhorn. Note, however, that Duke seems to imply all composer credits go to Strayhorn when he introduces the piece—according to publisher credits this was a collaboration!

*Brown Betty* must have been a very soulful and practical lady indeed. Another premiere performance at this Carnegie Hall concert, *Brown Betty* remained in the book until Duke recorded a new arrangement for Columbia in the Spring of 1951—Hodges's solo space was re-assigned to trumpeter Nelson Williams and Harry Carney. (Incidental-

ly, I detect a kinship here with Duke's 1958 composition *Princess Blue* with respect to mood, harmonic language, and orchestral timbre.)

#### 2-6. **Humoresque** (4:21)

[Anton Dvorak]

This light-classic novelty composed by Anton Dvorak features "Mr. Gentle and Mr. Cool"—that is to say Ray Nance on violin and Harold Shorty Baker on trumpet—as they became known by the composition Duke wrote to feature them at the Newport Jazz Festival almost a decade later (July 3, 1958). Nance alternates with bowed and pizzicato statements. Notice how Ellington plays the melody beneath Nance's second chorus before driving the violinist to a mad, Paganini-like climax. After an exciting classic big band shout chorus, Baker responds to the energy followed by half choruses from Carney and Hamilton. This arrangement was only in the book for a few months.

#### 2-7. **How High the Moon** (4:51)

[Nancy Hamilton & Morgan Lewis]

By 1945, a new concept of jazz had emerged called bebop. Spearheaded by such younger musicians as Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Max Roach, Bud Powell and Oscar Pettiford, this music emphasized fast tempos, highly chromatic chord progressions and most importantly, a different approach to rhythm. From the repertoire of the American popular song, "I Got Rhythm" by George Gershwin and "How High the Moon" (from a flop musical called *Theo For the Show*), were two of the favorite frameworks over which the bop musicians stretched their newly composed melodies. Ellington, however, had anticipated this process by writing *Cottontail* in 1940—based on Gershwin's "Rhythm," which in itself became a favorite of Charlie Parker in the 1942-43 period as the early boppers worked out their own "Rhythm" variations.

Between 1947 and 1974, at least 66 performances of Duke playing *How High the Moon* have been documented. Some of the later versions even incorporated Charlie Parker's Moon-variant "Ornithology" into the arrangement (which Hodges actually alludes to in *Brown Betty*—this one quotes "Hot House," "Tadd Dameron's spin on Cole Porter's "What

is This Thing Called Love.' Perhaps a Jimmy Hamilton or Dick Vance arrangement, this version is essentially the one which Duke waxed for Columbia on November 14, 1947.

After a deceptive, brightly paced introduction by the full ensemble, Ben Webster opens up the arrangement with an unusual and soulful reading of the theme in a slow, almost rubato tempo. The full ensemble returns with its intro in tempo to set Webster off into a swinging groove. Lo and behold, the intro is repeated again at an even brighter tempo which launches Webster into a third wailing, gutsy chorus. After a brief interlude, the arrangement concludes with Webster trading phrases with the ensemble and finally the great saxophonist blows an a cappella cadenza to bring in a fully-voiced ensemble chord.

#### 2-8. **Cotton Tail** (3:13)

[Duke Ellington]

Also known as "Hot Chocolate" and "Shuckin' and Stiffin," *Cottontail* is the best known of Webster's features with Ellington. Every time he rejoined the orchestra, there would invariably be requests for Webster to lay this one down. In addition to his often re-created solo on the Victor recording, the tenor saxophonist may have composed the equally famous saxophone soli heard in the penultimate chorus. Webster quotes the first 8 bars of each of his recorded choruses before moving on to new improvisations. For the most part, this performance follows that of the studio recording including short solos by Nance, Carney and Duke. However, after the recapitulation, Webster returns for a half-chorus and a closing cadenza. Unusually, throughout most of this performance, we hear Duke pumping rhythm. This practice was quite old-fashioned at the time—especially for the Duke.

The next item on the printed program reads "Al Hibbler sings." The arrangements in the four-tune miniset were probably written by Billy Strayhorn who had finished his apprenticeship with the Duke and was now writing with a strong, sure hand and intimate knowledge of the orchestra's effects.

#### 2-9. **Don't Be So Mean to Baby**



#### ('Cause Baby's So Good to You) (2:41)

[Peggy Lee & Dave Barbour]

Duke brings on "Albert George Hibbler" through a rather dense introduction to sing a strong, blues-tinged ballad (introduced by its composers on Capitol the previous year) similar to what we expect to hear from Billy Eckstine. Hibbler, blind from birth, had been with Duke since the Spring of 1943 and would remain with the orchestra until the Summer of 1951. Afterwards, Hib pursued a solo career culminating in his best-seller "Unchained Melody." Two of Ellington's best vocalists are still alive—Hibbler and Herb Jeffries. One can only hope that some enterprising producer will bring them together for concerts, club dates and recordings.

#### 2-10. **Lover Come Back to Me** (2:38)

[Sigmund Romberg & Oscar Hammerstein]

With nary a break, the band launches into a groovy-tempoed introduction to set up Hibbler for a long-metered chorus from the 1928 operetta *New Moon*. Al Killian takes a half chorus before Hibbler returns to take it out.

#### 2-11. **Trees** (3:56)

[Oscar Rasbach & Joyce Kilmer, 1922]

Judging from the intensity of this performance, it's hard to believe that this is another premiere performance. Again, Hibbler sings strongly and without sentimentality. On violin, Ray Nance fills in every available beat of space left around the vocalist's melody.



## 2-12. It's Monday Every Day (3:06)

[S. Robin]

This song and **Don't Be So Mean to Baby** had been recorded by Columbia in September of 1947 while Duke was on the West Coast. On Albert George Hibbler's closing piece Lawrence Brown shares some of the spotlight. "Although not a hit on the same level as 'Flamingo,' this amounts to a 'Concerto for Hib' just as the 1940 Groun-Anderston tune constituted a 'Concerto for Herb.'" Writes Will Friedwald in *Jazz Singing*, "Over an amazingly sensitive and thoroughly composed arrangement, Duke has Hibbler go through the paces of everything he can do: moan, grunt, cry, scream and, in a surprising but convincing note of optimism in the last four bars, it even sounds like he's praying." The audience response, unfortunately truncated due to CD time limitations, is deafening. As *Down Beat* reviewer Jack Egan noted, "Stopping an Ellington concert cold is nothing new for Hibbler, but, just for the records, he did it again."

## 2-13. Duke Ellington Hits Medley:

(total 9:39)

**Fanfare;**

**Don't Get Around Much Anymore;**

**Do Nothin' Til You Hear From Me;**

**In a Sentimental Mood;**

**Mood Indigo;**

**I'm Beginning to See the Light;**

**Sophisticated Lady;**

**Caravan;**

**It Don't Mean a Thing;**

**Solitude;**

**I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart/**

**Don't Get Around Much Anymore**

Before Duke has a chance to finish his acknowledgement of support from his audience, Sonny Greer provides a tumultuous rumble from his drums which launches the composer into what biographer Derek Jewell has dubbed "The Dreaded Medley." Yet the musicians don't seem to be tired of playing these wonderful pieces. Wisely, Duke constantly

revised and altered his medleys to keep his musicians interested. This one is a particularly good example of clever work where, for example, unisonous saxes and trombones launch into **I'm Beginning to See the Light** just as the three-horn front line reaches the last chord of **Mood Indigo**. Furthermore, Duke modulates up a fourth for the second A of **...Light**, thus maintaining momentum for the introduction of **Sophisticated Lady**.

These medleys also provided audiences with the opportunity to hear Duke at the piano. Every time he played, there would be some difference—a delicate voicing here, a surprising reharmonization there or, as in **Caravan**, something completely unexpected as Duke stretches out with some un-Arabian stride.

### THE ENCORES:

[Producer's Note: Because of CD time limitations, we have had to delete one of Ellington's spoken introductions. However, this speech is transcribed below.]

Ellington: "Thank you, thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. You're such a wonderful audience. We've never been more inspired and we're greatly indebted to you. We'd like now to do... or rather, not to introduce a new member, but one of the regular members who's been playing like crazy all night long. He's been blowing trombone. A lady in the front row was just suggesting, she was wondering what it would be like, say for instance, if one of the trombone players, say, the one on the end, got up and very gracefully moved around in back of the stands, you know? (Then appeared on the opposite side of the stage, with foot accompaniment from the rest of the band (sound of footsteps and applause), pushed his vibraphone to the front and center, turned out to be Tyree Glenn, and... what is it?" (Glenn speaks off mike.) Ellington: "'Milneburg Joys?'" (Glenn speaks again.) Ellington: "'Oh, **Limehouse Blues!**'" (Glenn: "'Thank you, Duke!!'")

## 2-14. Limehouse Blues (3:20)

[Philip Braham & Douglas Furber, 1922]

On June 16, 1931, Duke waxed a particularly brilliant version of an already ancient tune, **Limehouse Blues**. El-

lington revised the piece for this concert, probably in response to a request from his trombonist-showman Tyree Glenn. Later the best known of Trummy Young's replacements with Louis Armstrong's All Stars, the multi-talented Glenn composed music ("Sultry Serenade"), came closest to Joe Nanton's artistry with a toilet plunger, and was a fluent vibraphonist in the Lionel Hampton manner.

## 2-15. Just A-Settin' and A-Rockin' (4:50)

[Duke Ellington & Billy Strayhorn]

Every time Ray "Floorshow" Nance was brought to the front of the stage to sing, audiences were treated to a vocal-choreographical-concert-theatrical version of whatever-piece. Ben Webster lays down the first chorus, Nance sings the second and Tyree Glenn evokes Tricky Sam in the third. Nance returns to take it home. Also note Sonny Greer's activity in this tune as well as in the business after the applause.

### AN APPRECIATION AND SUMMARY

Duke used his Carnegie appearances as springboards for new material as well as new musicians. As was the case on this evening, many of the pieces played on this recording were given their premiere performances here. Some of them reflect a new spirit then evolving in jazz called bebop.

Bop was a revolution, a phenomenon and a problem. By this time it had been the new sound for at least six years. It's revolution was rhythmic, it brought forth phenomenally gifted musicians and it confused many well established hand leaders who felt they must try and update their styles (listen to Gene Krupa's and Benny Goodman's forays into bebop for example). Ellington, however, practically didn't have time to acknowledge bebop—particularly in his role as a composer—since he was already en route to exploring larger forms of musical expression and devices such as modalism and abstractions which were not incorporated by the mainstream of jazz until the 1960s (or in some cases the '70s).

While Duke didn't need to acknowledge bebop, his young musicians did. And some of them could have become major forces in the idiom had they played another instrument or been able to lead their own groups with more fre-

## 2-16. Trumpets No End (3:33)

[Mary Lou Williams]

Just after the applause from Duke's medley, you can hear a member of the audience ask for "Blue Skies." Evidently it was that same most vocal lady in the front row who requested such—and a Duke could never deny a lady's request. Ellington invites his five dynamic trumpeters to the front of the stage for some individual and soundly outrageous blowing. Based on Irving Berlin's 1926 classic, Mary Lou Williams's foremost contribution to the Dukeal book often suited this orchestra until the Spring of 1953.

## 2-17. Things Ain't What They Used To Be (0:38)

[Mercer Ellington & Ted Persons]

After a long and successful concert, and while Duke is still taking his bows, the magnificent Ellington orchestra wraps up the evening with one chorus of their closing theme.

**TOTAL TIME: DISC TWO [VJC-1025-2] = 75:24**

quency. Jimmy Hamilton is the first modern jazz clarinetist. Perhaps taking on a challenge from older masters such as Goodman and Shaw, Hamilton eclipsed the swing style and found how to apply the clarinet to the favor of bebop. Al Kilian, murdered by a psychopathic landlord shortly after his 1950 European tour with Ellington, was considered to be an excellent modern jazzman. Additionally, he may have contributed compositionally to the Ellington book as heard here in **You Ought a**.

The outreaching compositional ideas from Ellington and Strayhorn must have fostered a response from the musicians in the orchestra to meet certain challenges. It might be a new kind of chord progression, a particularly probing background riff, or especially a new melody orchestrated with originality which would inspire soloists and create interest in section work. Such compositions as *The Liberator Suite*, *Symphonica*, *Tattooed Bride*, and *Paradise* have yet to be understood in the context of Ellington's total work. As composer Anthony Coleman has pointed out, the least works of Stravinsky and Schoenberg have been thoroughly analyzed and documented while most of the greatest works

of Ellington have yet to be examined with care and thoroughness.

Finally, some of the important compositions heard on this date were never played again—or were dropped from the book after the orchestra's European tour in 1950. As well, Freddy Guy, Sonny Greer and Johnny Hodges soon left the band. These factors, I believe, help define a real transitional stage for Ellington. A thoroughgoing study of this period (1947-1950) will help us better understand the continuity of Ellington's development from the greatly acknowledged masterpieces of the early 1940s, through the unfair assessment of his work in the 1950s, and leading to the disregarded masterpieces written from the 1960s to the end of his life.

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NOTE: This set contains every scrap of music performed at this concert. In the best of all possible worlds, we would have been able to present each half of the concert on its own disc, but, the second half, which includes four encores, is nearly twenty minutes longer than the first. Thus we have had to move the opening number (*Manhattan Murals*) of the second half from the beginning of Disc Two to the end of Disc One.

That still left us with eighty minutes of program on the second disc. So, to trim this material down to a length acceptable for most CD players (just under 76 minutes), we judiciously edited out much of the rather lengthy applause sections—which got longer and longer as the evening wore on—in between the numbers on the second half (which also often included Ellington's applause-leading for the soloists of the preceding number—generally repeating their names over and over, as in "Johnny Hodges! Johnny Hodges! Johnny Hodges!" or "Albert Hibbler! Albert George Hibbler!"). The only item other than these which we were forced to eliminate was Ellington's long introduction of Tyree Glenn at the start of *Limehouse Blues*. However, we have transcribed this introduction (which Ellington deliberately stretched out to allow enough time for Glenn to come down from the trombone section and take his place at his vibraphone in front of the band), and placed it in sequence in this booklet.



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Design: **COLLIN KELLOGG**

Serious Ellington enthusiasts are encouraged to contact any of the international network of Duke Ellington Societies, particularly the Duke Ellington Society of New York. In addition, more essential music by the greatest of all jazz orchestras may be heard on *Take the 'A' Train: The Legendary Blanton-Webster Transcriptions, 1941* (VJC-1003-2); *Christmas Jubilee* (VJC-1016-2); *Fargo, North Dakota, 7 November 1940: First Complete Release of the Legendary Dance Date* (VJC-1019/20-2; 2 CDs). Check out these and other great compact disc releases from Vintage Jazz Classics at your favorite purveyor of music software.

**TOTAL TIME, BOTH DISCS = Two and one-half hours, two minutes and eleven seconds of music (152:11).**

CARNEGIE HALL,  
NOVEMBER 13, 1948

**DUKE  
ELLINGTON  
AND HIS ORCHESTRA**



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MANUFACTURED  
IN U.S.A.

COMPACT  
disc  
DIGITAL AUDIO

VJC-1024-2

1. Three Cent Stomp
2. Lady of the Lavender Mist
3. Suddenly It Jumped
4. Reminiscing in Tempo
5. She Wouldn't Be Moved
6. Symphonic or Bust
7. How You Sound
8. My Friend
9. Tootin' Through the Roof
10. Creole Love Call
11. Don't Blame Me
12. Paradise
13. The Tattooed Bride
14. Manhattan Murals

**DISC ONE**

CARNEGIE HALL,  
NOVEMBER 13, 1948

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disc  
DIGITAL AUDIO

VJC-1025-2

1. Lush Life
2. Hy'a Sue
3. Fantazm
4. You Ought'a
5. Brown Betty
6. Humoresque
7. How High the Moon
8. Cotton Tail
9. Don't Be So Meant to Baby ('Cause Baby's So Good to You)
10. Lover Come Back to Me
11. Trees
12. It's Monday Every Day
13. Duke Ellington Hits Medley
14. Limehouse Blues
15. Just A-Settin' and A-Rockin'
16. Trumpets No End
17. Things Ain't What They Used to Be

**DISC TWO**

## FIRST COMPLETE RELEASE OF ELLINGTON'S CLIMACTIC CARNEGIE HALL CONCERT!

### DISC ONE [VJC-1024-2] (76:47)

- 1-1. Three Cent Stomp (3:21)
- 1-2. Lady of the Lavender Mist (3:53)
- 1-3. Suddenly It Jumped (2:37)
- 1-4. Reminiscing in Tempo (12:04)
- 1-5. She Wouldn't Be Moved (4:59)

#### The Symphomaniac

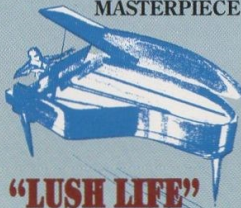
- 1-6. Symphonic or Bust (5:18)
- 1-7. How You Sound (3:48)
- 1-8. My Friend (5:58)
- 1-9. Tootin' Through the Roof (3:41)
- 1-10. Creole Love Call (4:03)
- 1-11. Don't Blame Me (2:37)
- 1-12. Paradise (5:30)
- 1-13. The Tattooed Bride (12:19)
- 1-14. Manhattan Murals (6:32)



VJC-1024/25-2



**FEATURING**  
ELLINGTON'S ONLY  
PERFORMANCE OF  
BILLY STRAYHORN'S  
MASTERPIECE



### DISC TWO [VJC-1025-2] (75:24)

- 2-1. Lush Life (6:33)
- 2-2. Hy'a Sue (7:29)
- 2-3. Fantazm (5:30)
- 2-4. You Ought'a (3:23)
- 2-5. Brown Betty (5:37)
- 2-6. Humoresque (4:21)
- 2-7. How High the Moon (4:51)
- 2-8. Cotton Tail (3:13)
- 2-9. Don't Be So Mean to Baby ('Cause  
Baby's So Good to You) (2:41)
- 2-10. Lover Come Back to Me (2:38)
- 2-11. Trees (3:56)
- 2-12. It's Monday Every Day (3:06)
- 2-13. Duke Ellington Hits Medley:  
(total 9:39)  
Fanfare; Don't Get Around Much  
Anymore; Do Nothin' Til You  
Hear From Me; In a Sentimental  
Mood; Mood Indigo; I'm Begin-  
ning to See the Light; Sophisti-  
cated Lady; Caravan; It Don't  
Mean a Thing; Solitude; I Let a  
Song Go Out of My Heart/Don't  
Get Around Much Anymore
- 2-14. Limehouse Blues (3:20)
- 2-15. Just A-Settin' and A-Rockin' (4:50)
- 2-16. Trumpets No End (3:33)
- 2-17. Things Ain't What They Used  
to Be (0:38)