

*The*  
DUKE ELLINGTON  
CARNEGIE HALL  
CONCERTS *December 1944*



  
Prestige®

*The*  
DUKE ELLINGTON  
CARNEGIE HALL  
CONCERTS *December*  
*1944*



## DISC 1

1. BLUTOPIA 4:19  
(Duke Ellington) EMI Robbins Catalog-ASCAP
2. MIDRIFF 3:33  
(Billy Strayhorn) EMI Robbins-ASCAP
3. CREOLE LOVE CALL 5:42  
(Ellington) Mills Music-ASCAP
4. SUDDENLY IT JUMPED 2:31
5. PITTER PANTHER PATTER 2:35  
(Ellington) EMI Robbins-ASCAP
6. IT DON'T MEAN A THING (IF IT  
AIN'T GOT THAT SWING) 3:46  
(Ellington-Mills) Mills-ASCAP
7. THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED  
TO BE 4:57  
(Ellington-Persons) Tempo Music-ASCAP

## PERFUME SUITE:

8. INTRODUCTION 0:58  
(Strayhorn-Ellington)
9. SONATA 3:10  
(Strayhorn-Ellington)
10. STRANGE FEELING 4:46  
(Strayhorn-Ellington)
11. DANCERS IN LOVE 2:21  
(Strayhorn-Ellington)
12. COLORATURA 2:43  
(Strayhorn-Ellington)

## DISC 2

### SELECTIONS FROM BLACK, BROWN AND BEIGE

1. WORK SONG 6:21
2. THE BLUES 5:03
3. THREE DANCES:  
WEST INDIAN DANCE / CREAMY  
BROWN / EMANCIPATION  
CELEBRATION 5:58
4. COME SUNDAY 11:11
5. THE MOOD TO BE WOODED 4:34  
(Ellington-Hodges) EMI Robbins Catalog-ASCAP
6. BLUE CELLOPHANE 3:04
7. BLUE SKIES 2:45  
(Irving Berlin) Irving Berlin Music-ASCAP
8. FRANKIE AND JOHNNY 7:43  
(Arr. by Duke Ellington)

All selections composed by Duke Ellington  
(Tempo Music-ASCAP), except as indicated.

DUKE ELLINGTON—leader, piano, arranger  
REX STEWART, TAFT JORDAN, CAT  
ANDERSON, SHELTON HEMPHILL—trumpets  
RAY NANCE—trumpet, violin  
(vocal on "It Don't Mean a Thing" only)  
TRICKY SAM NANTON, LAWRENCE  
BROWN, CLAUDE JONES—trombones  
JOHNNY HODGES, HARRY CARNEY,  
OTTO HARDWICKE, AL SEARS,  
JIMMY HAMILTON—reeds

FRED GUY—guitar  
JUNIOR RAGLIN—bass  
HILLARD BROWN—drums  
KAY DAVIS, MARIE ELLINGTON,  
AL HIBBLER—vocals

BILLY STRAYHORN—assistant arranger

Recorded in concert at Carnegie Hall,  
New York City, on December 19, 1944.

Issued by arrangement with Mercer  
Records and Mercer Ellington.

Reprocessed, from original source material,  
by Jerry Valburn and Jack Towers.

Assembled by Orrin Keepnews.

Audio restoration and digital  
mastering, 1991—Joe Tarantino  
(Fantasy Studios, Berkeley)

NoNOISE reprocessing by the  
Sonic Solutions System.

Art direction—Phil Carroll  
Design—Lance Anderson

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[NOTE: The total length of this concert has made it  
impossible to include in this 2-CD set every selection  
performed on this occasion. The omissions were  
necessarily arbitrarily decided on, and there was no  
simple system used. My tendency was to do without  
vocal and pop-song numbers and some very-  
frequently recorded Ellington standards, and to retain  
pieces rarely or never to be heard elsewhere—even if  
the performance was less than perfect.

—Orrin Keepnews]





The Ducal historians have informed us that the first known Ellington concert performance took place at the London Palladium on June 12, 1933. What is important is not so much the date or the performance itself as the fact that Duke Ellington and his Orchestra had elevated themselves from the level of entertainers in nightclubs, dance halls, stage shows, and movie sets, to the epitome of recognized musical respectability, the concert stage. On that first European tour, Duke may have been slightly overwhelmed to realize that his recordings of the past six or seven years had actually created such an intense and serious following. In the United States, what he was creating was accepted, but merely as the work of another musician on the busy scene.

The European tour, with all its acclaim and acceptance, ignited a spark in Ellington. On his return home, he began

concentrating on writing longer and more serious musical scores in an attempt to move beyond the popular music of the day. He did not abandon his efforts to write hit songs, and they continued to keep the band in the limelight, but the serious writing paved the way toward fulfillment of Duke's ambition to perform someday on the stage of New York's Carnegie Hall. This event was then almost ten years away—and in all fairness it took the popularity of Swingdom's Benny Goodman to break down the barriers against jazz performance in that hallowed hall. On the night of the fabled 1938 Goodman concert, Duke Ellington was at Harlem's Savoy Ballroom sitting in with the Count Basie band, while his representatives Johnny Hodges, Harry Carney, and Cootie Williams were holding forth with Benny.

The road to Carnegie was a long but most interesting one for the band. During the Thirties and early Forties, the concert was still the exception, but some of these are worth recalling. In the plush Urban Room of the Congress Hotel in Chicago (May 1936), certain evenings were designated as "concert nights"—the dance format replaced by a concert for the patrons of the room. On January 12, 1937, while appearing at Sebastian's Cotton Club in Los Angeles, the band gave the first known coast-to-coast radio jazz concert over the Mutual Network. During the same club stand, they gave an afternoon concert at the University of Southern California. Among their more memorable early college concerts are the February 1939 concert at New York's City College and the December 12, 1940 concert at Colgate University (in which the band's newest addition, Ray Nance, performed the feature piece of his predecessor, "Concerto for Cootie," on the electric violin!). One concert particularly to be noted is the famous Randall's Island "Carnival of Swing" on May 19, 1938. There the Ellington band appeared with 14 others in an all-day benefit program, and their performance of the then relatively new "Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue" brought on crowd hysteria similar to the celebrated Newport Jazz Festival performance of the 1950s.

Through the years, Duke seemed to be preparing for a truly major concert. An article in the October 1938 *Metronome* Magazine noted that after six years of spare-time composing, he had completed his opera dealing with the history of the American Negro from the jungles of Africa to modern Harlem. In the February 1939 issue,

this same magazine told its readers that Ellington was scheduled to bring his outfit into Carnegie Hall on Sunday, February 26, and that he would be performing arias from his own "operetta." Of course, this concert did not materialize and March 30, 1939 found the entire crew in Paris to begin a lengthy second European concert tour. One can only speculate that the opera mentioned in that October 1938 article may have become part of a future Ellington work, the "tone parallel to the history of the American Negro," *Black, Brown and Beige*.

The war years brought about many changes among the nation's bands. The suddenly affluent sell-out crowds in the ballrooms and nightclubs were offset by the nightmare of attempting to keep band personnel intact. Many musicians, tired of the uncertain road conditions of those days, left traveling bands to remain in one location, joining geographically stable orchestras or the rising numbers of small combos earning good money in the many new jazz clubs, or taking steady staff jobs with the broadcast networks. Bandleaders, plagued with such headaches, naturally enough turned to raiding rival orchestras, luring talent away with promises of more money, benefits, and featured solo work.

The famed 1941 Ellington band had remained basically intact, except for the untimely death of bassist Jimmy Blanton, but their problems began when they took to the road at the end of a long California stand in June 1942 and clarinetist Barney Bigard decided to remain behind and join the Freddie Slack orchestra as a featured star. Then, after a month at the Panther Room of the Hotel Sherman in Chicago, Duke found himself without his great vocalist, Ivie Anderson, who had been with the band since 1932. Ivie, in poor health, decided to return to the West Coast and take life a little easier.

More major changes took place during a six-month stand at New York's Hurricane Restaurant that began in April of 1943. First, there was the great loss of the dominant figure of Ben Webster, who left on August 13. Skippy Williams held down Ben's chair until he was called for military service in May 1944; his replacement, Al Sears, was to remain as the band's tenor saxophonist through September 1949. The other significant change in the read section had a similar cause. When Chauncey Houghton, Bigard's replacement, was scheduled to be inducted in April 1943, the talented Jimmy Hamilton was hired. Jimmy filled the clarinet chair for almost 25 years, and

also proved to be a talented writer and arranger and contributed a good deal to the Ellington book.

The trumpet section underwent quite a few changes in 1943-44, the end result being a fine section of five horns. It began when Rex Stewart decided to take a leave of absence in June 1943. Duke was able to get the multi-talented Tuff Jordan, who was able to play the various styles of the trumpet section as well as his own Armstrong-influenced style, and could also be called upon for vocal specialties. Tuff remained when Rex returned in December. First trumpeter Wallace Jones left the next month and was replaced by the reliable Shelton Hemphill. Then Ray Nance took a leave of absence—only to get a hurried call to come back when Shorty Baker was drafted in April 1944. Later that year, while the band was working in Chicago, Duke, who could not forget the sound created by the five horns, had the opportunity of hearing William "Cat" Anderson, then playing with Lionel Hampton. Shortly thereafter, Cat was persuaded to leave the Hampton band and join the Ellingtonians during a Labor Day weekend engagement at the Earle Theater in Philadelphia. During the 1944 Hurricane stand, veteran trombonist Juan Tizol was lured away by Harry James, but Ellington was fortunate in obtaining Claude Jones as his replacement. The last noticeable change at the time of this 1944 concert was due to the illness of veteran drummer Sonny Greer. Hillard Brown was brought in to replace him at the Downtown Theater in Chicago in October of 1944, and remained until Sonny returned in March 1945.

In late November 1944 the band returned from an extended Midwest road trip to play the Apollo Theater and remained in the New York area for most of December. Activity was concentrated in the recording studios. The ban which had been in effect since August 1942 had ended and there were many important Ellington and Strayhorn compositions to be recorded. On December 13, the band played their annual concert at Boston's Symphony Hall with the newspaper advertisements reading "Duke Ellington and his Concert Orchestra." Since the success of the 1943 first Carnegie concert, it was expected that Duke would return there at least once a year as well as playing annually at Symphony Hall in Boston and at Chicago's Civic Opera House. The Carnegie concert of December 19 had a sell-out house, even without the major advance publicity and fanfare that had accompanied the two 1943 concerts. The formula for the evening's program remained the same:

(1) the premiere of a new extended work; (2) feature mini-concertos showcasing the band's members; (3) a few memorable favorites from earlier years along with the melody of song hits.

The concert opens with the composition "Blutopia," commissioned earlier in the year by Paul Whiteman and marking the second time that Duke had composed for Whiteman. (The first, "Blue Belles of Harlem," was presented at Whiteman's Christmas 1935 Carnegie concert.) "Blutopia" can best be described as a tone poem played against a rhythm exercise. The trumpet notes are by Taft Jordan, and Al Sears handles the feature work.

Billy Strayhorn emerged in the 1940s as a vital contributor to the band's book. His composition "Midriff" gives Lawrence Brown's trombone the main melody line.

"Creole Love Call" is a good example of Ellington returning to his musical roots. Fortunately, in 1944, he had been able to bring in a remarkable singer, Kay Davis, whose wide vocal range could be utilized as a solo instrument, enabling the Ellington of 1944 to recreate the unusual effect of his original 1927 recording where Adelaide Hall had used her voice as an instrument. The solo honors on this one go to Tricky Sam Nanton, Ray Nance, and Harry Carney on clarinet.

"Suddenly It Jumped" is an Ellington original introduced earlier in the year at the Hurricane. It is an up-tempo flag-waver featuring punctuated rhythm between Ellington and bassist Junior Raglin along with Jimmy Hamilton's clarinet and Jordan's exciting trumpet.

"Pitter Panther Patter" was originally recorded in October 1940, one of four duets involving Ellington on piano and Jimmy Blanton on bass that rank among the most unusual and original recordings of their time. In this performance the Duke/Junior Raglin duet is augmented by a full band introduction and background.

"It Don't Mean a Thing," a 1932 Ellington hit, is brought forth here in a deliberate rhythm pattern. Ray Nance offers the vocal and this is followed by some excellent plunger work from trombonist Joe Nanton. Nance's violin and Taft Jordan's horn spark the introduction to Al Sears's booting tenor.

The *Perfume Suite* was the ambitious Ellington-Strayhorn extended work that made its debut at this concert, described as portraying the changing moods of a woman who wears different perfumes and falls under the influence of all of them. The suite is divided into four movements,

each of which has at times had several titles. "Sonata" (also known as "Love" or "Under the Balcony") is the first movement. That this is Strayhorn's work is quite apparent in the exquisite sound of the reeds. The fine tone of Ray Nance's trumpet provides the introduction.

"Strange Feeling" (sometimes "Violence") offers us the rich baritone of Albert Hibbler as he laments the unusual lyrics. It is Cat Anderson's muted trumpet work we hear toward the end of this section. The third move-



ment, best known to Ellington followers as "Dancers in Love" (or "A Stomp for Beginners"), has also been called "Naivety." It is a rhythmic opus full of humor and emphasizing Ellington's ragtime style with Raglin's strong bass support. "Coloratura," the final movement, is also known as "Sophistication." It is a feature for the high-note talents of Cat Anderson and is, as Duke explained it, "representative of the person who feels over and above everything, just frightfully grand."

It is fortunate that the movements of this suite were loosely related, for in later years the *Perfume Suite* was rarely performed in its entirety. Two of its movements did continue to be well received. "Strange Feeling" was incorporated into the Ellington production of *My People* and "Dancers in Love" continued to close many an Ellington concert with the audience joining in on the finger-snapping routine.

Following the premier performance of *Black, Brown and Beige* in 1943, Duke realized that the entire work was too lengthy for the concert stage and that there were sections that did not have that distinguishing Ellington touch. Always a good judge of his own limitations, he wisely decided to cut the work down much as a playwright might cut lines in revamping a script. The end result was a featured concert segment of excerpts from *Black, Brown and Beige*, retaining the great themes and certainly the impact of the original.

The opening segment is "The Work Song." Much of the original *Black* movement has been retained here and it features the outstanding baritone sax of Harry Carney and the muted trombone work of Tricky Sam Nanton. On the final notes of this section you can hear the beautiful and lyrical alto of "Toby" Hardwicke.

Next comes "Maave" or simply "The Blues," with some very melodic tenor sax work on the part of Al Sears. (While saxophonists such as Sears and Gonzales brought their own style of tenor to the Ellington band, when it came to a blues or a ballad it was always to be played in the style and tradition of the one and only Ben Webster.)

"Three Dances" comprise the next section. The first is the "West Indian Dance" and the rhythms are just that. This is followed by "Creamy Brown" (or "Sugar Hill Penthouse"), a short but very melodic theme, and lastly "Emancipation Celebration" (or "Lighter Attitude") the highlight of the section, featuring the great valve artistry of Rex Stewart along with Tricky's trombone and Junior Raglin's bass. "Come Sunday," which closes out these excerpts, remains as one of the most beautiful of all Ellington themes. Ray Nance's tasteful violin and Claude Jones's trombone build up to the entrance of Johnny Hodges's alto, the dominant feature of this moving performance.

"Things Ain't What They Used to Be" was first recorded by a small Ellington unit in 1941 and became a swing standard a year later in Charlie Barnet's big band hit ver-

sion. Ellington quickly assembled a full band orchestration used countless times as a filler or as a sign-off theme for a broadcast or concert. The variation played here is in a slower, more deliberate blues tempo featuring Jordan, Hodges, and Lawrence Brown.

Of all the great soloists who developed in the Ellington band, perhaps no one had a greater influence than Johnny Hodges. Both Ellington and Strayhorn composed countless concertos for his alto sax. The composition showcasing his talents at this particular time was "Mood to Be Woored," and Johnny performs it the way we expect of him, the notes flowing from his golden sax.

"Blue Collophane" was written to showcase trombonist Lawrence Brown, who had joined the band in the spring of 1932. It gives him a chance to demonstrate his almost flawless technique, his warm and mellow tone, and the special quality in his playing that contrasted so effectively with the stylings of Joe Nanton and Juan Tizol.

"Blue Skies," later to be known as "Trumpets No End," was an arrangement written for the band by Mary Lou Williams in 1943. It is a driving vehicle which starts with Jimmy Hamilton and Taft Jordan and ends with Cat Anderson on the high notes.

The crowd wouldn't let Duke off the stage that night. One cannot think of any better encore to play than one which featured the great talent of Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton on the plunger. Since his death in 1946, there have been many trombonists who have attempted—without real success—to emulate his *wa wa* style. A musician friend of mine put it this way: "Most trombonists go *wa wa* but Tricky goes *ja ja*." The selection is the American folk song "Frankie and Johnny"—a great way to end an Ellington concert!

—Jerry Valburn

Notes reproduced from the original album liner

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# THE DUKE ELLINGTON CARNEGIE HALL CONCERTS

*December 1944*



COMPACT  
DIGITAL AUDIO  
MARKETED BY  
**ZYX**  
P.O. BOX 100  
2PCD 24073-2

1. Blantonia 4:19
2. Midriff 3:33
3. Creole Love Call 5:42
4. Suddenly It Jumped 2:31
5. Pitter Panther Patter 2:35
6. It Don't Mean a Thing  
(If It Ain't Got That Swing) 3:46
7. Things Ain't What They Used to Be 4:57

**Perfume Suite:**

8. Introduction 0:58
9. Sonata 3:10
10. Strange Feeling 4:46
11. Dancers in Love 2:21
12. Coloratura 2:43

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**From Black, Brown and Beige:**

1. Work Song 6:21
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3. Three Dancers:  
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Emancipation Celebration 5:58
4. Come Sunday 11:11
5. The Mood to be Woode 4:34
6. Blue Cellophane 3:04
7. Blue Skies (Trumpets No End) 2:45
8. Frankie and Johnny 7:43

DECEMBER 1944

THE DUKE ELLINGTON CARNEGIE HALL CONCERTS

PRESTIGE  
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## DISC ONE (TOTAL TIME 45:00)

- 1 Blutopia (4:19)
- 2 Midriff (3:33)
- 3 Creole Love Call (5:42)
- 4 Suddenly It Jumped (2:31)
- 5 Pitter Panther Patter (2:35)
- 6 It Don't Mean a Thing  
(If It Ain't Got That Swing) (3:46)
- 7 Things Ain't What They Used to Be (4:57)

## Perfume Suite:

- 8 Introduction (0:58)
- 9 Sonata (3:10)
- 10 Strange Feeling (4:46)
- 11 Dancers in Love (2:21)
- 12 Coloratura (2:43)

## DISC TWO (TOTAL TIME 49:00)

From **Black, Brown and Beige**:

- 1 Work Song (6:21)
- 2 The Blues (5:03)
- 3 Three Dances:  
West Indian Dance / Creamy Brown /  
Emancipation Celebration (5:58)
- 4 Come Sunday (11:11)
- 5 The Mood to be Woood (4:34)
- 6 Blue Cellophane (3:04)
- 7 Blue Skies (Trumpets No End) (2:45)
- 8 Frankie and Johnny (7:43)

Total time has been rounded off to the nearest minute.

AAD

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AND HIS ORCHESTRA  
CARNEGIE HALL CONCERT  
DECEMBER 19, 1944

With (in alphabetical order)

Cat Anderson  
Hillard Brown  
Lawrence Brown  
Harry Carney  
Kay Davis  
Marie Ellington  
Fred Guy  
Jimmy Hamilton  
Otto Hardwicke  
Shelton Hemphill  
Al Hibbler  
Johnny Hodges  
Claude Jones  
Taft Jordan  
Ray Nance  
Tricky Sam Nanton  
Junior Raglin  
Al Sears  
Rex Stewart

Booklet essay by  
Jerry ValburnIssued by arrangement with Mercer Records  
and Mercer Ellington.

One of Duke's triumphant returns to the hallowed stage of Carnegie Hall during the Forties, this concert offered the premiere of a new extended work (*The Perfume Suite*), but had as its real highlight several brilliant, fully-developed segments of 1943's *Black Brown and Beige*.

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the Sonic Solutions System.

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