

*The*  
**DUKE ELLINGTON**  
**CARNEGIE HALL**  
**CONCERTS** *January 1946*



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**DUKE ELLINGTON**  
**CARNEGIE HALL**  
**CONCERTS** *January 1946*



  
Prestige®

### DISC 1

1. CARAVAN 3:45  
(Ellington-Tizol-Mills) Mills Music Inc.-ASCAP
2. IN A MELLOW TONE 2:54  
(Ellington-Gabler) EMI Robbins Catalog-ASCAP
3. SOLID OLD MAN 3:35  
(Duke Ellington) Mills Music-ASCAP

### SELECTIONS FROM BLACK, BROWN AND BEIGE:

4. SPIRITUAL (COME SUNDAY)/  
WORK SONG 12:06
5. THE BLUES 5:08
6. RUGGED ROMEO 3:09

7. SONO 5:04
8. AIR-CONDITIONED JUNGLE 5:45  
(Hamilton-Ellington) Tempo Music-ASCAP
9. PITTER PANTHER PATTER 2:14  
(Ellington) EMI Robbins Catalog-ASCAP

### DISC 2

1. TAKE THE "A" TRAIN 3:26  
(Billy Strayhorn) Tempo-ASCAP

### A TONAL GROUP:

2. MELLODITTI 7:30
3. FUGUEADITTY 2:40
4. JAM-A-DITTY 3:34
5. MAGENTA HAZE 4:41

6. DIMINUENDO IN BLUE/  
TRANSLUCENCY 7:28  
(Duke Ellington) Mills Music-ASCAP/  
(Brown-Ellington) Tempo-ASCAP

7. CRESCENDO IN BLUE 3:40  
(Ellington) Mills Music-ASCAP

8. SUBURBANITE 4:32

9. I'M JUST A LUCKY SO  
AND SO 4:32  
(Ellington-David) Harry Von Tilzer Music/  
Paramount Music-ASCAP

10. RIFFIN' DRILL 2:26

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

DUKE ELLINGTON—leader, piano, arranger  
TAFT JORDAN, CAT ANDERSON, FRANCIS  
WILLIAMS, SHELTON HEMPHILL—trumpets  
LAWRENCE BROWN, CLAUDE JONES,  
WILBUR De PARIS—trombones  
JOHNNY HODGES, HARRY CARNEY,  
OTTO HARDWICKE, AL SEARS,  
JIMMY HAMILTON—reeds

AL LUCAS—guitar  
OSCAR PETTIFORD—bass  
SONNY GREER—drums  
JOYA SHERRILL, KAY DAVIS,  
AL HIBBLER—vocals

BILLY STRAYHORN—assistant arranger

Recorded in concert at Carnegie Hall, New  
York City, on January 4, 1946.

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  
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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 selec-  
tion 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]



Although World War II was over its effects were still being severely felt when this concert took place in January 1946. Three years before, Ellington had given his first Carnegie Hall concert and premiered *Black, Brown and Beige*. Like every new step in his musical career, it had met with a mixed reception. The lofter critics thought he had bitten off more than he could chew, such long works being beyond the scope of a mere jazz musician. But in embattled Europe his fans heard about it in the unlikeliest and most uncomfortable situations, and felt the deepest envy of those fortunate enough to be present at the premiere.

The controversy *Black, Brown and Beige* provoked did much to ensure what was to become an institution, the annual Ellington concert at Carnegie Hall. The series continued until, as Ellington wrote in *Music Is My Mistress*, "everybody was giving concerts, and even a concert in Carnegie Hall no longer had the prestige value it had in 1943, but our series there had helped establish a music that was new in both its extended forms and its social significance."

Ellington was, of course, the best equipped of anyone in jazz to give concerts. He and his colleague, Billy Strayhorn, were the only composers really worthy of the name in their field, and they were also its best arrangers. The band was still supreme despite defections, and its leader was an increasingly confident and authoritative player both in solo and ensemble. In addition, he had the experience, the temperament, and the personality to meet demands peculiar to the concert hall.

For him, then, it was a logical step, and it followed as a consequence of all the insidious pressures to tart up jazz, to write "rhapodies," and to invite comparisons with "classical" composers. (When he was compared to Delius, he had never heard of the British composer, but he had expressed himself naturally in a similar, sensitive fashion.)

The surpassing virtues of uncompromising jazz performances like, say, "Rockin' in Rhythm," "Ring Dem Bells," "Bundle of Blues," "Stompy Jones," "Harlem Speaks," "Echoes of the Jungle," "Showboat Shuffle," "Merry-Go-Round," "Ridin' on a Blue Note," "Old King Dozi," "The Gal from Joe's," "Jack the Bear," "Perdido," "Main Stem," "Way Low," "Koko," "Cotton Tail," "Bojangles," "In a Mellotone," "Harlem Airshaft," and "Rockabye River" were virtually lost on many whose own experience was primarily in European and European-styled

music, and who believed that Ellington would greatly benefit from increased exposure to it. They were happier when he began to write individual showcases for his soloists and titled them "concertos." It was the familiar, recurring story about making a lady out of jazz, about putting it in top hat and tails, about investing it with "dignity" and "sophistication." Broadway and Hollywood knew a lot about sophistication and their taste had inevitably to be considered. Ellington was also well aware that the larger part of his audience was white, with all the preferences and prejudices of various ethnic heritages. In the climate of its time, "Mood Indigo" was probably more distinctive than his original title, "Dreamy Blues," but it was not better, not more descriptive. To be smart or "arty" was in a sense to compromise, but an underlying commercial necessity for Ellington was, from first to last, the maintenance of his instrument, his orchestra.

In moving increasingly from the dance hall, the nightclub, and theater into the concert hall, the major change was in the disassociation from dancers, whether professionals or members of the public. The audience now sat for a longer period on its collective posterior (instead of shaking it), and it had to be entertained or titillated in new ways. It could only divert itself briefly with liquor and tobacco at intermission. While there were obvious advantages in securing a listening audience and removing distractions from it, there were immediate penalties as it became harder to stir without resorting to exhibitionism, novelty, and constant variety. Despite earlier experience in places like the Cotton Club and the Apollo Theater, it is safe to say that jazz became much more self-conscious in the concert hall. Among the first casualties, too, were good tempos, the compelling kind on which a band could swing and rock most easily. The "pure" arrangements for big bands that Fletcher Henderson wrote, for example, were primarily geared to the requirements of the dance hall. Jazz connoisseurs might have enjoyed whole concerts of these arrangements, but such connoisseurs were few and the concert trend was decidedly away from the Henderson tradition. The big bands, of course, all had their flag-wavers, which were used to demonstrate collective virtuosity in battles with other bands, and they all played pop songs of the period with varying degrees of artistry, but by and large the character of their music had been determined by the needs of dancers. Feet moved to tempos that were

appropriate to the human body rather than to the machine, and these tempos—whether slow, medium, or fast—were those at which the musicians were in the closest communication with the dancers, and were in fact *swinging*. It was a two-way relationship that didn't exist in the concert hall, and while jazz musicians continued to swing from habit, it was not so important a factor there. By 1946, Jazz at the Philharmonic was already beginning to make its mark by stressing excitement and virtuosity with a new emphasis.

The move to the concert hall and the changes that ensued were inevitable. They grew out of the practices of the Thirties. Bands and ballrooms were in big trouble because of World War II, and concerts offered the possibility of welcome new venues and, indeed, an artistic stimulus. By the time concerts ceased to have great news value, long-playing records were simultaneously extending a challenge and another opportunity. By the time they had become commonplace, the outdoor festival arrived to prolong the life of jazz.

Ellington, undoubtedly the wisest and most intelligent person in the business, had always been quick to size up the potential in a situation—and to act. In retrospect, one can see that his timing was perfect in 1943. All the writing that had been done about jazz in books and magazines—not to mention the publicity hopes—along with the extensive public exposure to it on radio, had created a big and enthusiastic audience, one that was often idolatrous, but not always notably hip. The extended works had prestige value, an air of ambition and serious endeavor that three-minute masterpieces with offhand titles like "Hip Chic," "Pussy Willow," and "Grievin'" did not have.

The longer works and suites offered Ellington opportunities to express himself more expansively and with more freedom, to "put on" the audience playfully and, more important, to proceed with a series of "social significance trusts." He was a subtle tactician engaged in warfare all his life with those who patronized him, those who cheated him in business whenever they could, and those who discriminated against what he called "my people." After his death some unfortunate adjectives were used by writers who would probably not have dared to use them during his lifetime. Gene Lees, conditioned by the studio world Ellington disliked and mistrusted, referred to him as "vain" and "cunning." Now the importance of making a "glamorous" appearance on stage was not really a

matter of vanity, but of "selling" the band, especially in later years when some of his chief stars had died, or had left because of age, and he had largely to carry the show with his personality. Offstage, among friends, he was anything but vain, often dressing in worn clothes that others would have discarded long since. But cunning, in the sense that he was very shrewd, he certainly had to be, to fight powerful adversaries. Inevitably, there were many who resented a black musician attaining the position he did and commanding so much respect throughout the world. Another writer, Derek Jewell, referred to "a vein of snobbery" in his make-up. This was perhaps a misinterpretation of his pleasure in being presented to kings, queens, princes, and presidents. Some of them happened to be charming people doing a difficult job well, but beyond respect for their rank or office, Ellington felt when they showed him respect he was gaining respect for his race. It was the same Ellington, after all, who would chaffer amiably at a sidewalk fruit stall around three in the morning in New York, sampling the wares before loading the cab with purchases; who gossiped unburiously with the salesmen and other customers at his favorite hat store on 125th Street in Harlem; and who never failed to ask the nurse for his lollipop when he left the premises of the Upper Manhattan Medical Group, emerging contentedly on the street with the stick poking out of his mouth. All kinds of people had access to him, and he found time and kind words for them. Nor were what he called "my people" in actuality black only.

In his "social significance trusts," he was very much concerned with the plight of black people in his country. After "Jump for Joy" in 1941, he followed through with *Black, Brown and Beige* two years later, with *New World a-Comin'* in 1945, *The Deep South Suite* in the fall of 1946, and *Harlem* in 1950, all touching on related racial themes of injustice and hope. In between these were works of slighter moral content designed to appeal to the "sophisticates" in his audience, works such as *The Perfume Suite*, *The Tattooed Bride* and, as performed at this concert, *A Tonal Group*. He walked, as it were, a musical tightrope, a smile on one side of his face, a frown on the other.

"The purpose of these annual Carnegie Hall concerts," he said at this 1946 appearance, "is primarily to present our instrumentalists in their solo and ensemble responsibilities to the best of their advantages, in appreciation of the fact that they are the inspiration of all the things that are written."

This was very generous of him, especially since some of the musicians most likely to inspire were no longer with him. Most grievous was the absence of the ailing Tricky Sam (Joe Nanton), the nonpareil of plunger trombone, who was to die a few months later. Juan Tizol, so useful for exotic theme statements, was also absent, and a great responsibility therefore rested on Lawrence Brown's shoulders. Barney Bigard was gone, too, and nobody could replace him and his elegant New Orleans traceries, although the technically gifted Jimmy Hamilton, stylistically more akin to Benny Goodman, was beginning to carve out a new clarinet domain. There was no tenor saxophonist yet to fill the void left by Ben Webster, Paul Consalves still being several years in the future. Yet in the saxophone section were the two inimitables from Boston, Johnny Hodges and Harry Carney, as dependable as ever. Toby Hardwicke of the original Washingtonians was there, too, and his alto and Hodges' gave the section a creamy quality that still remains unique. Ray Nance was temporarily away and his absence was another cause for serious concern, since there was no Cootie Williams or Rex Stewart to take care of the plunger trumpet role. But Taft Jordan and Cat Anderson, as one can hear, acquitted themselves well. Continuing the tradition of two bassists established in the Thirties, Ellington had both Al Lucas and Oscar Pettiford on stage. The latter had joined the band the previous November during its engagement at the Zanzibar, replacing Junior Raglin. He was generally regarded at this time as the best possible substitute for Jimmy Blanton, and was accordingly given the responsibility of duetting with the boss on "Pitter Panther Patter." That Al Lucas was no slouch either is evident on "Air-Conditioned Jungle."

The critics were, of course, well aware of the changes in the band's personnel, and reading their reviews more than thirty years later it is impossible not to feel that they came to the concert expecting to be disappointed. Barry Ulanov, for example, began his notice in *Metronome* (February 1946) thus:

"The notes I took at the Ellington concert are all messed up, so I can hardly read them. But it's not my fault; it's Duke's. He messed up his own program in his familiar perverse way, changing the order around, not too wisely, not too well. He started almost an hour late and put too much on the program. He played some stuff that was entirely out of place in a concert hall, some that was

remarkably tasteless. And yet—and yet—it was Ellington, and most of it was great, and if it had been anyone else nobody would be talking about anything else."

Of the new music, Ulanov found "Fugue" and "Sono" "utterly enthralling"; he liked "Caravan" "in its new polytonal voicing"; he found Taft Jordan the most impressive soloist "outside of Carney," and "Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue" as "stunning" as in 1937; he admired Jimmy Hamilton's "exquisite tone and easy command" while wishing Ellington would write "a less turgid, more vital setting" for him.

In a parallel review in the same magazine, George Simon wrote that "major let-downs were the comparative lack of thrilling solos and the non-appearance of any top-notch, new, lengthy Ellington composition. . . ." *A Tonal Group* sounded ill-prepared to him and Lawrence Brown was his "individual hero of the evening." Ellington, on the other hand, "did not put enough effort into the planning of the concert." Simon accordingly labeled him the "villain of the evening!" The rhythm section "didn't jell" in "Solid Old Man," and attention was drawn to Carnegie Hall's echoes, to the fact that Sonny Greer was so high up, and that the two bassists hadn't worked together enough. The program's low "was a thing called "Air-Conditioned Jungle," featuring Jimmy Hamilton's "toneful, blatant clarinet." There were further references to Cat Anderson's "screaming," to Al Sears's "tremendous beat," and to Al Hibbler singing "too close to the mike."

In *Down Beat* (January 28) Evelyn Ehrlich's notice was headed "Carnegie Concert Has Below Par Ellington." She pointed out that the hall was sold out to the last chair, including "the too many rows which cluttered up the stage." She felt that "Ellington's contribution, in its entirety, lacked its usual charm and effectiveness. . . ." (Even though he obligingly announced the result of the fight that night!) After mentioning the famous absentees, she nevertheless found the trumpet section "nothing short of sensational!" (It certainly does the shakes on "Solid Old Man" very fiercely and creditably.) Hamilton was "increasingly becoming a greater asset," the "greatness" of William Anderson was suitably highlighted, and the compositions in *A Tonal Group* had "to be heard for a conception" [sic].

The negativity that colors these reports was familiar to Ellington through most of his career, for his present always

ended to be compared unfavorably with his remote or immediate past. In the long retrospect now possible to us, a more balanced appraisal can be made. Unlike the reviewers quoted, we know what happened both before and after this concert, which is likely to appear of much more interest and value than it did to them.

It is really a good example of how Ellington operated under pressure, and of how ably he improvised with the resources at hand. The constant clamor for big, new works from the greatest jazz composer had a comic, greedy side. Those who clamored the most, who wanted something new at every concert, and who put such emphasis on composition, apparently did not really want to hear these important works repeated! Yet in jazz, interpretation is vital, and it is surely illuminating to hear the modified excerpts from *Black, Brown and Beige* played by a considerably different band with different soloists. It is interesting, too, to find the transition from "Diminuendo" to "Crescendo" made with that fine vehicle for Kay Davis, "Transbluency." This "blue fog you can almost see through," as Ellington described it, is attractive, but it isn't quite right in the context. It doesn't have the impact of the transition Paul Consalves was to fashion a decade later.

By this time, Johnny Hodges was probably being taken for granted by many critics. None of the three quoted had much to say about him, and Ulanov, one may suppose, already had bigger eyes for Charlie Parker. Yet Hodges's appearances here—on "In a Mellotone," "Come Sunday," "Riffin' Drillin' Melloditty," and a new showcase, "Magenta Haze"—all have his imperturbable authority. Musicians continued to marvel at him to the end of his days, but with laymen and critics it was often a matter of serving fashion.

"Sono" was a far from perfect solution to the problem of displaying Harry Carney's talents to the best advantage. A splendid interpreter, he was not a great improviser, but his assimilable patience was eventually to be rewarded with "La Plus Belle Africaine." Ellington's humor was to the fore with "Suburbanite," which featured the bustling tenor of Al Sears, a musician most of the crowd seemed to have liked just as much as Ben Webster! Taft Jordan was showcased on "Rugged Romeo," another slight vehicle, and together with Cat Anderson he took care of business very well on B., B. and B. Anderson's potential was also shown in Cootie Williams's original spot on "In a Mellotone."

Lawrence Brown was a real pillar of strength at this concert, but note also Wilbur De Paris's effective 16 bars on the exuberant "Solid Old Man."

Originally, "The Blues" was sung by Betty Roche, but later Joya Sherrill made it very much her own. She sang it at this concert, and well. There are good reasons for believing her the best singer Ellington ever had, and not merely the prettiest. Certainly, the best song Al Hibbler ever sang with the band—or the one that suited him best—the one he retained here, "I'm Just a Lucky So and So."

The three parts of *A Tonal Group*, variously known as "Rhapsoditty" or "Melloditty," "Fugeaditty" or "Fugue," and "Jam-a-Ditty" or "Concerto for Jam Band," were probably completed shortly before their performance and were underrehearsed. The balance in this live recording may leave something to be desired, but the music that emerges gives, as the lady said, "a conception"—of serious and more than meritorious work. Indeed, it requires more than one hearing. In describing the first part as "mildly rhapsodized melody," Ellington scarcely does justice to its unusual development, contrasting statements by Hardwicke and Hodges, and trumpet duet by Cat Anderson and Francis Williams; in the second, Jordan, Brown, Hamilton, and Carney are in the foreground playing "two tunes at once"; and the same four horns are ingeniously employed to achieve a striking *concerto grosso* effect on "Jam-a-Ditty." Altogether, Ellington and Strayhorn had every reason to feel they had kept faith with their public.

—Stanley Dance

author of *The World of Duke Ellington* (Seribner's)

Notes reproduced from the original album liner.

The four volumes of Ellington at Carnegie on Prestige are:  
January 1943 (2PCD-34004-2)  
December 1944 (2PCD-24073-2)  
January 1946 (2PCD-24074-2)  
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THE DUKE ELLINGTON  
CARNEGIE HALL CONCERTS  
JANUARY 1946

DISC 1

1. CARAVAN 3:45
2. IN A MELLOW TONE 2:54
3. SOLID OLD MAN 3:35



DIDX 009638  
COMPACT  
disc  
DIGITAL AUDIO  
2PCD-24074-2

AAD

SELECTIONS FROM BLACK, BROWN  
AND BEIGE:

4. SPIRITUAL (COME SUNDAY)  
WORK SONG 12:06
5. THE BLUES 5:08
6. RUGGED ROMEO 3:09
7. SONO 5:04
8. AIR-CONDITIONED JUNGLE 5:45
9. PITTER PANTHER PATTERN 2:14

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THE DUKE ELLINGTON  
CARNEGIE HALL CONCERTS  
JANUARY 1946

DISC 2

1. TAKE THE "A" TRAIN 3:26
- A TONAL GROUP:
2. MELLODITTY 7:30
  3. FUGUEADITTY 2:40
  4. JAM-A-DITTY 3:34



DIDX 009639  
COMPACT  
disc  
DIGITAL AUDIO  
2PCD-24074-2

AAD

5. MAGENTA HAZE 4:41
6. DIMINUENDO IN BLUE/  
TRANSLUCENCY 7:28
7. CRESCENDO IN BLUE 3:40
8. SUBURBANITE 3:28
9. I'M JUST A LUCKY SO AND SO 4:32
10. RIFFIN' DRILL 2:26

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JANUARY 1946

THE DUKE ELLINGTON CARNegie HALL CONCERTS

PRESTIGE  
2PCD-24074-2

**DISC ONE (TOTAL TIME 48:00)**

- 1 Caravan (3:45)
- 2 In a Mellow Tone (2:54)
- 3 Solid Old Man (3:35)

From *Black, Brown and Beige*

- 4 Spiritual (Come Sunday)/Work Song (12:06)
- 5 The Blues (5:08)
- 6 Rugged Romeo (3:09)
- 7 Sono (5:04)
- 8 Air-Conditioned Jungle (5:45)
- 9 Pitter Panther Patter (2:14)

**DISC TWO (TOTAL TIME 50:00)**

- 1 Take the "A" Train (3:26)

A Tonal Group

- 2 Melloditti (7:30)
- 3 Fugueaditty (2:40)
- 4 Jam-a-ditty (3:34)
- 5 Magenta Haze (4:41)
- 6 Diminuendo in Blue/Transblucency (7:28)
- 7 Crescendo in Blue (3:40)
- 8 Suburbanite (3:28)
- 9 I'm Just a Lucky So and So (4:32)
- 10 Riffin' Drill (2:26)

Total time has been rounded off to the nearest minute.

AAD

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**DUKE ELLINGTON  
AND HIS ORCHESTRA  
CARNegie HALL CONCERT  
JANUARY 4, 1946**

with (in alphabetical order)

Cat Anderson  
Lawrence Brown  
Harry Carney  
Kay Davis  
Wilbur DeParis  
Sonny Greer  
Fred Guy  
Jimmy Hamilton  
Otto Hardwicke  
Shelton Hemphill  
Al Hibbler  
Johnny Hodges  
Claude Jones  
Taft Jordan  
Al Lucas  
Oscar Pettiford  
Al Sears  
Joya Sherrill  
Francis Williams

Booklet essay by  
Stanley Dance

Issued by arrangement with Mercer Records  
and Mercer Ellington.



At this 1946 edition of the Duke's historic 1940s concert series, the emphasis was on expansiveness, with selections from the previously-presented *Black, Brown and Beige*, a brand new "tonal group" and a reshaping of one of his earliest longer works, the 1930s pairing of "Diminuendo" and "Crescendo in Blue."



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PRESTIGE  
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THE DUKE ELLINGTON CARNegie HALL CONCERTS

JANUARY 1946