



## DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA 1940

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|--|----------|------|---|----------|------|
| <b>1</b> YOU, YOU DARLIN' (Scholl-Jerome)<br><i>(044887-2)</i>       | 03-06-40 | 3:15 | <b>14</b> BOJANGLES (Ellington)<br><i>(053021-1)</i>                    | 05-28-40 | 2:51 |
| <b>2</b> JACK THE BEAR (Ellington)<br><i>(044888-1)</i>              | 03-06-40 | 3:16 | <b>15</b> A PORTRAIT OF BERT WILLIAMS (Ellington)<br><i>(053022-1)</i>  | 05-28-40 | 3:08 |
| <b>3</b> KO-KO (Ellington)<br><i>(044889-2)</i>                      | 03-06-40 | 2:40 | <b>16</b> BLUE GOOSE (Ellington)<br><i>(053023-1)</i>                   | 05-28-40 | 3:21 |
| <b>4</b> MORNING GLORY (Ellington-Stewart)<br><i>(044890-1)</i>      | 03-06-40 | 3:15 | <b>17</b> HARLEM AIR-SHAFT (Ellington)<br><i>(054606-1)</i>             | 07-22-40 | 2:58 |
| <b>5</b> SO FAR, SO GOOD (Lawrence-Mundy-White)<br><i>(044891-1)</i> | 03-06-40 | 2:53 | <b>18</b> AT A DIXIE ROADSIDE DINER (Leslie-Burke)<br><i>(054607-1)</i> | 07-22-40 | 2:46 |
| <b>6</b> CONGA BRAVA (Ellington-Tizol)<br><i>(049015-1)</i>          | 03-15-40 | 2:56 | <b>19</b> ALL TOO SOON (Ellington)<br><i>(054608-1)</i>                 | 07-22-40 | 3:29 |
| <b>7</b> CONCERTO FOR COOTIE (Ellington)<br><i>(049016-1)</i>        | 05-15-40 | 3:14 | <b>20</b> RUMPUS IN RICHMOND (Ellington)<br><i>(054609-1)</i>           | 07-22-40 | 2:46 |
| <b>8</b> ME AND YOU (Ellington)<br><i>(049017-1)</i>                 | 03-15-40 | 2:56 | <b>21</b> MY GREATEST MISTAKE (Fulton-O'Brien)<br><i>(054624-1)</i>     | 07-24-40 | 3:23 |
| <b>9</b> BOJANGLES (Ellington)<br><i>(049654-1)</i>                  | 05-04-40 | 2:43 | <b>22</b> SEPIA PANORAMA (Ellington)<br><i>(054625-1)</i>               | 07-24-40 | 3:22 |
| <b>10</b> COTTON TAIL (Ellington)<br><i>(049655-1)</i>               | 05-04-40 | 3:08 |   |          |      |
| <b>11</b> NEVER NO LAMENT (Ellington)<br><i>(049656-1)</i>           | 05-04-40 | 3:16 |   |          |      |
| <b>12</b> BLUE GOOSE (Ellington)<br><i>(049657-1)</i>                | 05-04-40 | 3:18 |   |          |      |
| <b>13</b> DUSK (Ellington)<br><i>(053020-1)</i>                      | 05-28-40 | 3:19 |   |          |      |

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## DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA 1940

"Superlatives cannot describe the quality of the music you are about to hear. Even Duke Ellington himself, known for his discretion when judging the abilities of his orchestra, admitted in his autobiography that in 1940 "we were in very good shape" and "we produced some very good music". Several of the 22 enclosed sides rank among the most important and most spectacular music recorded by any group of musicians in the first half of this 20th century! Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington was born in Washington, D.C., on April 29, 1899. While still at high school, he began playing in his native city. He soon organized his first little group, "The Duke's Serenaders", including Otto Hardwick and Arthur Whetsol, both of whom were to remain with him for many years. Duke Ellington first came to New-York in 1923 with "The Washingtonians", then still led by Elmer Snowden. A year later, the highly ambitious Duke Ellington took over the group and worked with it successfully at the "Kentucky Club" until 1927. The developing band's most successful engagement, at the "Cotton Club", lasted until 1931, when the fledgling Cab Calloway Orchestra took over their spot. Duke Ellington's first tour to England, Scotland and France in 1933 proved an immense personal and musical triumph. During the thirties, the Duke and his Orchestra travelled extensively in the United States, and their second visit to Europe six months before the outbreak of war enabled many of their admirers to hear the band in the flesh. Many agree that by 1940 the orchestra had reached its artistic peak. The band's first Carnegie Hall concert in January 1943 was followed by innumerable appearances at the world's most famous theatres. Duke Ellington was fortunately able to continue his regular tours around the globe until a short time before his death on May 24, 1974 - one month after celebrating his 75th birthday.

This volume of the complete recordings of Duke Ellington presented in chronological order includes his first sessions after rejoining RCA-Victor. Compared with Columbia, this company's recording techniques suited the Ellington band much better. The opening "You, You Darlin'" sounds clearer and fuller than any of Duke's previous recordings. "Jack The Bear" is the first of many stunning performances and it showcases the Jimmy Blanton bass. Blanton's playing on this and all the following tracks influenced generations of bassists. "Ko-Ko", recorded at the same session has frequently been analyzed in detail, most thoroughly by Gunther Schuller, who called it a "triumph of form and content". Ivie Anderson's vocals with Duke's spectacular 1940 band have often been overlooked, yet, like most of the instrumentalists, the singer was now at her artistic peak. "So Far So Good" and "Me And You" are truly impressive tracks. The latter also includes a breathtaking "chase" between Lawrence Brown and Johnny Hodges, one of many unforgettable highlights. Another high spot is "Cotton Tail", which convincingly refutes the argument that no one could write for a saxophone-section like Benny Carter. Alongside the drive and power of tracks like "Harlem Air-Shift" and "Rumpus In Richmond", "Dusk" (reminiscent of "Mood Indigo") and "Blue Goose" (with Johnny Hodges' soprano-sax) reveal the romantic side of Ellington's 1940 outfit. No matter how often these sides are issued, they will forever be appreciated, admired and loved by all jazz fans. To be continued...

Anatol Schenker, December 1994.

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**DISCOGRAPHY DUKE ELLINGTON 1940**

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**DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS FAMOUS ORCHESTRA:** Duke Ellington-p-a dir. Wallace Jones -Cootie Williams-t/Rex Stewart-c/Joie "Tricky Sam" Nanton -Lawrence Brown-tb/Juan Tizol-vtb/Barney Bigard-cl/Johnny Hodges-cl-ss-as/Harry Carney-cl-as-bar/Otto Hardwick-as-bsx/Ben Webster-ts/Fred Guy-g/Jimmy Blanton-sb/Sonny Greer-d/Ivie Anderson -Herb Jeffries-v.

044887-2 You, You Darlin' - vHJ  
044888-1 Jack The Bear  
044889-2 Ko-Ko  
044890-1 Morning Glory  
044891-1 So Far, So Good - vIA

Chicago, March 6, 1940.

Victor 26537  
Victor 26536  
Victor 26577  
Victor 26536  
Victor 26537

**DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS FAMOUS ORCHESTRA:** same.

049015-1 Conga Brava  
049016-1 Concerto For Cootie  
049017-1 Me And You - vIA

Chicago, March 15, 1940.

Victor 26577  
Victor 26598  
Victor 26598

**DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS FAMOUS ORCHESTRA:** same.

049654-1 Bojangles  
049655-1 Cotton Tail  
049656-1 Never No Lament  
049657-1 Blue Goose

Hollywood, May 4, 1940.

Victor originally unissued  
Victor 26610  
Victor 26610  
Victor originally unissued

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**CLASSICS 805**

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**DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS FAMOUS ORCHESTRA:** Duke Ellington-p-a dir. Wallace Jones -Cootie Williams-t/Rex Stewart-c/Joie "Tricky Sam" Nanton -Lawrence Brown-tb/Juan Tizol-vtb/Barney Bigard-cl/Johnny Hodges-cl-ss-as/Harry Carney-cl-as-bar/Otto Hardwick-as-bsx/Ben Webster-ts/Fred Guy-g/Jimmy Blanton-sb/Sonny Greer-d/Ivie Anderson-v.

053020-1 Dusk  
053021-1 Bojangles  
053022-1 A Portrait Of Bert Williams  
053023-1 Blue Goose

Chicago, May 28, 1940.

Victor 26677  
Victor 26644  
Victor 26644  
Victor 26677

**DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS FAMOUS ORCHESTRA:** same.

054606-1 Harlem Air-Shaft  
054607-1 At A Dixie Roadside Diner - vIA  
054608-1 All To Soon  
054609-1 Rumpus In Richmond

New York, July 22, 1940.

Victor 26731  
Victor 26719  
Victor 27247  
Victor 26788

**DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS FAMOUS ORCHESTRA:** Otto Hardwick omitted.

054624-1 My Greatest Mistake  
054625-1 Sepia Panorama

New York, July 24, 1940.

Victor 26719  
Victor 26731

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# DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA 1940



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- |    |                     |            |          |      |    |                             |            |          |      |
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| 11 | Never No Lament     | (049656-1) | 05-04-40 | 3:16 | 22 | Sepia Panorama              | (054625-1) | 07-24-40 | 3:22 |

ALL TITLES DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS FAMOUS ORCHESTRA.  
1 HERB JEFFRIES VOCAL. 5, 8, 18 IVIE ANDERSON VOCAL.

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