



DUKE ELLINGTON'S

LIBERIAN SUITE



DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

COLUMBIA 

NONBREAKABLE
LONG PLAYING
MICROGROOVE



CL 6073

flora

COLUMBIA*

DUKE ELLINGTON'S
LIBERIAN SUITE

DUKE ELLINGTON and his ORCHESTRA

CL 6073

NONBREAKABLE
(LP 1490)

I LIKE THE SUNRISE
Vocal Chorus by Al Hibbler
DANCE No. 1
DANCE No. 2



LONG PLAYING Lp MICROGROOVE

*Trade Marks Reg U.S. Pat. Off. Marcos Registrados Made in U.S.A. Pat. Pending *Trade Marks

COLUMBIA*

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NONBREAKABLE
(LP 1497)

Dance No. 3
Dance No. 4
Dance No. 5



LONG PLAYING Lp MICROGROOVE

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Duke Ellington's Liberian Suite

DUKE ELLINGTON and his Orchestra

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Liberia is a small republic in West Africa of some 46,000 square miles and a population of approximately two and one-half million. The important thing about Liberia is contained not in these facts, however, but in the nature of its founding. For this republic was founded by freed American slaves, some returning to Africa, many of them going there for the first time, to work out their destinies freely for themselves under their own government. The colony was founded at Monrovia in 1822 with the help of American societies, and declared a republic in 1847. During the centennial celebration in 1947, the Liberian government offered a commission to Duke Ellington to compose a suite of music appropriate to such an occasion. The commission was accepted, and Duke Ellington's *Liberian Suite* was given its first public performance at a concert in Carnegie Hall on the night of December 26th, 1947; a second performance was given on the following night.

These two concerts epitomized another anniversary as well, for in 1927 Duke Ellington opened at Harlem's Cotton Club with his first great orchestra. Through these years Ellington has become one of the most important figures in American music, playing popular numbers of immense variety with genuine style and distinction. His compositions and arrangements are models of thoughtful exploration and development, many of them classics in a field where the ephemeral is the rule, and have spread beyond the dance halls to concert halls. Moreover, during its long and tremendously successful career, the orchestra has maintained a standard of superb musicianship and impeccable musical taste, becoming a truly unique organization in American music.

Ellington's *Liberian Suite*, consisting of an introduction and five dances, represents the spirit motivating the foundation of the republic. Although the composition is rich in reference to primitive rhythms and themes, the general atmosphere is one of increasing sophistication coincident with the growing stature of Liberia as a member of the nations. Extensive use of contrapuntal writing is evident, together with Ellington's matchless gift for imaginative orchestration, and the *Liberian Suite* stands as a major work in the slow fusion of popular and classic music.

Introduction: "I Like The Sunrise"—The suite begins quietly with apparently hopeful themes leading to the lyrics, sung by Al Hibbler. A central variation builds to affirmative motives, with heavier rhythmic emphasis, and a reprise of the final section of the lyrics.


Dance No. 1—Beginning with a resonant African rhythm, the first dance grows through a series of themes expressive of the Liberian locales to a busy, steady rhythm featuring a statement-and-answer technique. As the dance ends, the initial rhythm is continued under a building theme. Al Sears is heard on tenor sax.

Dance No. 2—This dance moves through a series of bright, lively themes in a modified jump idiom. The rhythms become progressively involved, with soloists posed against the body of the orchestra. A retard after the last major solo leads into a chordal finale, Jimmy Hamilton plays the clarinet, Tyree Glenn the vibraharp.

Dance No. 3—Here a blues-y melody in a rhythm suggesting the tango (believed in many quarters to be of essentially African derivation) is heard over an underlying jungle rhythm. Ray Nance plays the violin solo, which gives way to a baritone sax solo by Harry Carney in subtly changed accents. Al Killian's trumpet is also heard in this dance, which rises to a climax of orchestral color.

Dance No. 4—A much wilder tempo is heard in this dance, which dashes along with an insistent beat. Extensive percussion work by Sonny Greer adds excitement, and Johnny Hodges is heard on the sax. A series of fetching figures for the reeds occurs, as well as occasional references to jungle noises, before the dance fades out.

Dance No. 5—In the final dance, a sultry melody is carried across an unusual bass figure, with brash punctuation by the orchestra. Harry Carney is heard on baritone sax, and Tyree Glenn on trombone. The dance grows through repetition of themes over the bass figure, which slightly resembles a rumba construction, and rises to shining chords at the finale, with the brass high over the rest of the orchestra.

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