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Duke Ellington was probably the most prolific recording artist in the history of jazz. Besides its customary functions, the recording studio served him as a creative workshop, a rehearsal hall, and almost a second home. New ideas and occasionally new men were tried out; old works were refurbished, too, and veterans exercised. Here he could hear what he had written overnight, or make the frameworks he had merely imagined come alive in “head” arrangements. The studio was not just a place he visited at the behest of record companies. When there were gaps between engagements, he and his men would almost invariably spend some of their time there, recording at his expense. The musicians on a fixed salary would thus contribute to what he called his “stockpile” of recordings, from which the titles in this collection have been drawn. Equally important, some of the band’s wilder spirits were kept out of mischief in what would otherwise have been their “free” time! Although they were good-humored affairs, such sessions were serious in intent, and valuable in building morale. They took place wherever the band happened to be, and not only in its New York home-base. So in this case there is a session in Chicago, another in Toronto, a third in New York, and a performance at a fourth in a place and on a date unknown. This inevitably accounts for minor differences in sound quality, some of it attendant on the differences of the studio pianos, but the already large recorded picture of Duke Ellington’s contribution to twentieth-century music is notably extended.

The program opens with *Cool Rock*, a typical, well-titled piece that features two of the bands greatest soloists, Johnny Hodges and Cootie Williams. It is cool in terms of composure and confidence, not of emotional content, for these are players who tell their stories with warmth and feeling as the ensemble rocks buoyantly behind them. It would not be hard to put words to Hodges solo statements, because he was probably the most lyrical of all jazz improvisers. *P.S.170* is a complete contrast. To which school—or school teacher—the title alludes is not known, but the rhythm might suggest Spanish Harlem. While the rhythm section plays a kind of relaxed Latino shuffle, Jimmy Hamilton’s legit-toned flights, as well as comments from Lawrence Brown, Harry Carney and the piano player, hint at mild academic aspirations.

*Don’t You Know I Care?* was written by Duke Ellington in 1944. A graceful ballad, it never received its due, possibly because of WWII conditions. The composer illustrates its charms at the piano in the first chorus, and then hands over solo responsibility to Harold “Geezil” Minerve, an alto saxophonist of marked individuality. He likes the melody, too, and sandwiches his imaginative improvisation between affectionate statements of it. Johnny Hodges and Cootie Williams return in *Hi, June* and *Hi, Jane*, respectively. Each salutation is stylistically characteristic—Hodges in a light-hearted mood, Williams in one of mock gravity, masters both. It is to be hoped that the ladies thus greeted are still around to appreciate compliments paid them more than a quarter-century ago!

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Ellington’s music for *Anatomy of a Murder* was one of the best—and most undervalued—soundtracks written for a movie in the jazz idiom. The original version was heavier on brass, but this is more menacing and mysterious, particularly in its rhythmic emphasis. Ellington draws a striking variety of sounds and colors from the piano, using its percussive nature at one point as though to evoke an occult jungle drum. Williams’s plunger-muted trumpet and Jimmy Hamilton’s earthy tenor saxophone add appropriately dramatic touches. *Alone Together* features Norris Turney’s flute with accompaniment by Joe Benjamin and Rufus Jones only. Ellington had by no means capitulated to the flute fad in 1972 (he understandably preferred clarinets), but he chose the opportunity for this demonstration *in estenso* at the end of a session when the rest of the musicians sat around or quietly packed up their instruments. *Chinoiserie* was the most memorable number in Ellington’s 1971 suite, *The Afro-Eurasian Eclipse*. As in the original, tenor saxophonist Harold Ashby is the star, but this wilder, more extroverted version. *Vancouver Lights*, written by Canadian Ron Collier, intriguingly juxtaposes Russell Procope’s clarinet with Harry Carney’s bass clarinet. One states the theme and the other answers. The potential in color contrasts between the two instrument is seldom realized so effectively. *Hello, Dolly!* is Money Johnson’s ardent tribute to Louis Armstrong, who had died the year before. He captures the great Satchmo’s spirit well in his trumpet playing, but his singing brought back warm memories, too, and always aroused much audience enthusiasm.

*The Twitch* returns us to the Universal studio in Chicago, where Ellington and his men always seemed at their happiest. As with several other numbers that day, the writing was not at all complicated, but playing the blues over Sam Woodyard’s stirring shuffle rhythm was a sure-fire formula. Johnny Hodges, saxophone king of the blues, wails for two choruses, and so does Cootie Williams. Then Paul Gonsalves steps in gingerly for five more till the band comes in -- responding to the leader’s piano promptings to take it out! Performances like this, as of *Cool Rock*, are made to sound so easy by this band that they are all too often underestimated.

Last thing in *Things Ain’t What They Used To Be*, which for many years served to end programs as Hodges declaimed over the shouting ensemble. It continued in that position with even more significance after his death in 1970, and here we have Ben Webster’s disciple, Harold Ashby, in his place. Ashby swings energetically and, like Hodges, gets down and dirty before they all obey the piano’s instructions to say goodbye.

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STANLEY DANCE,  
author of *The World of Duke Ellington* (Da Capo Press)

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Duke Ellington and His Orchestra  
*Cool Rock*

- (a) Duke Ellington, *piano*  
*Trumpets:* Cootie Williams, Cat Anderson, Herbie Jones, Paul Serrano  
*Trombones:* Lawrence Brown, Buster Cooper, Chuck Connors  
*Reeds:* Johnny Hodges, Russell Procope, Jimmy Hamilton, Paul Gonsalves, Harry Carney  
*Bass:* John Lamb • *Drums:* Sam Woodyard
- (b) Duke Ellington, *piano*  
*Trumpets:* Mercer Ellington, Money Johnson, Johnny Coles, Fred Stone  
*Trombones:* Vince Prudente, Chuck Connors  
*Reeds:* Russell Procope, Geezil Minerve, Norris Turney, Harold Ashby, Harry Carney  
*Bass:* Joe Benjamin • *Drums:* Rufus Jones
- (c) Probably as (b), Cootie Williams replacing Stone, and Booty Wood, trombone added.

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Duke Ellington &amp; His Orchestra - COOL ROCK

# DUKE ELLINGTON and HIS ORCHESTRA

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|---|--|--------|----|---|--------|
| 1 | <b>COOL ROCK</b> <sup>*(a)</sup><br>(DUKE ELLINGTON) - <i>FAMOUS MUSIC</i>   | [4:35] | 9  | <b>VANCOUVER LIGHTS</b> <sup>*(b)</sup><br>(RON COLLIER) - <i>RON COLLIER MUSIC</i>                                       | [3:11] |
| 2 | <b>P.S. 170</b> <sup>*(a)</sup><br>(DUKE ELLINGTON) - <i>FAMOUS MUSIC</i>  | [3:44] | 10 | <b>HELLO DOLLY</b> <sup>(b)</sup><br>(JERRY HERMAN, 1963)<br><i>EDWIN H. MORRIS</i>                                       | [3:43] |
| 3 | <b>DON'T YOU KNOW I CARE?</b> <sup>(c)</sup><br>(DUKE ELLINGTON/MACK DAVID, 1944)<br><i>PARAMOUNT MUSIC / POLYGRAM INT'L.</i>                        | [5:53] | 11 | <b>THE TWITCH</b> <sup>(a)</sup><br>(DUKE ELLINGTON, 1966)<br><i>TEMPO MUSIC</i>  | [5:06] |
| 4 | <b>HI, JUNE</b> <sup>*(a)</sup><br>(DUKE ELLINGTON) - <i>FAMOUS MUSIC</i>  | [2:57] | 12 | <b>THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY<br/>USED TO BE</b> <sup>(b)</sup><br>(MERCER ELLINGTON/TED PERSONS, 1953)<br><i>TEMPO MUSIC</i> | [3:16] |
| 5 | <b>HI, JANE</b> <sup>*(a)</sup><br>(DUKE ELLINGTON) - <i>FAMOUS MUSIC</i>  | [5:51] |    |   |        |
| 6 | <b>ANATOMY OF A MURDER</b> <sup>(a)</sup><br>(DUKE ELLINGTON, 1959)<br><i>WARNER-CHAPPELL</i>  | [3:33] |    |   |        |
| 7 | <b>ALONE TOGETHER</b> <sup>(b)</sup><br>(HOWARD DIETZ / ARTHUR SCHWARTZ)<br><i>POLYGRAM INT'L. MUSIC PUBL.</i>                                       | [3:42] |    |   |        |
| 8 | <b>CHINOISERIE</b> <sup>(b)</sup><br>(AFTER TCHAIKOVSKY'S <i>NUTCRACKER BALLET</i> ,<br>ARR. BY ELLINGTON AND BILLY STRAYHORN)<br><i>TEMPO MUSIC</i> | [4:53] |    |   |        |

All Songs ASCAP

\* Premiere release. These songs have  
never been heard before!

PRODUCED BY DUKE ELLINGTON

LINER NOTES BY STANLEY DANCE

LICENSED FROM MERCER ELLINGTON

COMPILED AND EDITED BY RALPH JUNGHEIM

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Duke Ellington &amp; His Orchestra - COOL ROCK

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