



**THE  
ELLINGTON  
ERA**

**1927-1940**



**Duke Ellington & His Famous Orchestra**  
**Volume Two**



**Part Three**



# THE ELLINGTON ERA

1927 - 1940

Duke Ellington And His Famous Orchestra

Volume Two - Part Three

FACE A



62613

B.I.E.M.  
FR. MELODIE

XLP 110082  
(XPARTX 56719)

33 1/2

1. ALL GOD'S CHILLUN GOT RHYTHM (B. Kaper-W. Jurmann-G. Kahn) (2'21)  
Ivie Anderson And Her Boys From Dixie - Vocal : Ivie Anderson
2. DUSK ON THE DESERT (I. Mills - D. Ellington) (3'03)
3. STEPPING INTO SWING SOCIETY (D. Ellington-H. Nemo-I. Mills) (3'04)
4. PYRAMID (J. Tizol-D. Ellington-I. Mills-J. Gordon) (2'51)
5. A GYPSY WITHOUT A SONG (2'54)  
(I. Gordon-D. Ellington-L. Singer-J. Tizol)
6. DINAH'S IN A JAM (D. Ellington) (2'58)
7. BUFFET FLAT (D. Ellington) (2'23)
8. OLD KING DOOJI (D. Ellington) (2'29)

MADE IN FRANCE



CBS, INC.

# THE ELLINGTON ERA

1927 - 1940

Duke Ellington And His Famous Orchestra

Volume Two - Part Three

FACE B



62613

B.I.E.M.  
FR. MELODIE

XLP 110083  
(XPARTX 56720)

33 1/2

1. PUSSY WILLow (D. Ellington) (2'38)
2. SOMETHING TO LIVE FOR (D. Ellington-B. Strayhorn) (2'49)  
Vocal : Jean Eldridge
3. WAY LOW (D. Ellington) (3'25)
4. I'M CHECKING OUT, GOODBYE (B. Strayhorn-D. Ellington) (2'25)  
Vocal : Ivie Anderson & Sonny Greer
5. SERENADE TO SWEDEN (D. Ellington) (3'18)
6. LITTLE POSEY (D. Ellington) (2'37)
7. WEELY (D. Ellington) (2'55)
8. TOOTIN' THROUGH THE ROOF (2'51)  
(D. Ellington)

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# THE ELLINGTON ERA 1927-1940 - Vol. 2. Part 3

## SIDE ONE

Track 1 - **ALL GOD'S CHILLUN GOT RHYTHM** (Kaper-Jarmann-Ashby, Varsity 291 and M 320-1), June 8, 1938 - Ivie Anderson and Sonny Greer, trumpet; Duke Ellington, piano; Duke Ellington, tenor saxophone; Duke Ellington, alto saxophone; Duke Ellington, baritone saxophone; Duke Ellington, bass; Duke Ellington, Fred Guy, Bill Taylor, Harry Hawk, Sonny Greer, rhythm section; Ivie Anderson, vocal.  
TIME: 2:13.  
Track 2 - **DUK ON THE DESERT** (Mills-Ellington), Brunswick 8029 (mx M 831-2), September 20, 1937 - Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra.  
PERSONNEL: Same as track 1 except: Hayes Alvia out.  
TIME: 3:53.  
Track 3 - **STEPPING INTO SWING SOCIETY** (Ellington-Mills-Gardner), Brunswick 8031 (mx M 831-1), January 7, 1938 - Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra.  
PERSONNEL: Same as track 1 except: Harold Barker, trumpet, added; John Farnham, tenor saxophone; Duke Ellington, piano; Duke Ellington, Fred Guy, Bill Taylor, Harry Hawk, Sonny Greer, rhythm section; Ivie Anderson, vocal.  
TIME: 3:04.  
Track 4 - **PYRAMID** (Tizol-Ellington-Mills-Gardner), Brunswick 8168 (mx M 834-3), July 1, 1938 - Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra.  
PERSONNEL: Same as track 3 except: A. J. Sison, valve trombone, added.  
TIME: 2:51.  
Track 5 - **A GYPSY WITHOUT A SONG** (Gordon-Ellington-Singer-Tizol), Brunswick 8186 (mx M 843-1), March 20, 1938 - Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra.  
PERSONNEL: Same as track 3.  
TIME: 2:54.  
Track 6 - **DINAH'S IN A JAM** (Ellington), Brunswick 8169 (mx M 811-1), April 11, 1938 - Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra.

PERSONNEL: Same on track 2 except: Harold Barker, trumpet, added; Sonny Greer, clarinet.  
Track 7 - **BUFFET FLAT** (Ellington), Brunswick 8331 (mx M 886-1), December 22, 1938 - Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra.  
PERSONNEL: Same as track 2.  
TIME: 2:33.  
Track 8 - **OLD KING DOOJIE** (Ellington), Brunswick 8306 (mx M 859-1), December 22, 1938 - Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra.  
PERSONNEL: Same as track 2.  
TIME: 2:29.

## SIDE TWO

Track 1 - **FUSSY WILLOW** (Ellington), Brunswick 8341 (mx WM 99-1), March 20, 1938 - Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra.  
PERSONNEL: Wallace Jones, Cootie Williams, Rex Stewart, trumpet-clarinet; Duke Ellington, tenor saxophone; Duke Ellington, alto saxophone; Duke Ellington, baritone saxophone; Duke Ellington, bass; Duke Ellington, Fred Guy, Bill Taylor, Harry Hawk, Sonny Greer, rhythm section.  
TIME: 2:37.  
Track 2 - **SOMETHING TO LIVE FOR** (Ellington-Strayhorn), Brunswick 8365 (mx WM 1007-1), March 21, 1939 - Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra.  
PERSONNEL: Same as track 1 except: Billy Strayhorn, piano, re-titled; John Farnham, vocal.  
TIME: 2:37.  
Track 3 - **WAY LOW** (Ellington), Brunswick 8411 (mx WM 1032-A), June 4, 1939 - Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra.  
PERSONNEL: Same as track 1.

Track 4 - **I'M CHECKING OUT GOOMBYE** (Strayhorn-Ellington), Columbia 3528 (mx WM 1031-A), June 17, 1939 - Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra.  
PERSONNEL: Same as track 1 except: Ivie Anderson, Sonny Greer, tenor saxophone.  
TIME: 2:25.  
Track 5 - **SERENADE TO SWEDEN** (Ellington), Columbia 3514 (mx WM 1033-A), June 6, 1939 - Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra.  
PERSONNEL: Same as track 1.  
TIME: 2:18.  
Track 6 - **LITTLE POSEY** (Ellington), Columbia 3529 (mx WM 1031-A), October 14, 1939 - Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra.  
PERSONNEL: Same as track 1.  
TIME: 2:37.  
Track 7 - **WE'LLY** (Ellington), Columbia 3535 (mx WM 1095-A), October 14, 1939 - Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra.  
PERSONNEL: Same as track 1.  
TIME: 2:37.  
Track 8 - **TOTIN' THROUGH THE ROOF** (Ellington), Columbia 3536 (mx WM 1096-A), October 14, 1939 - Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra.  
PERSONNEL: Same as track 1.  
TIME: 2:51.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Discographie Critique by Hugues Panassié (LaFont, Paris): The Jazz Works of Duke Ellington by Benny H. Astand (Oakland, Sweden).  
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THE ELLINGTON ERA 1927-1940  
(Vol. 1 - Part 1) 30 cm 62178  
THE ELLINGTON ERA 1927-1940  
(Vol. 1 - Part 2) 30 cm 62179  
THE ELLINGTON ERA 1927-1940  
(Vol. 1 - Part 3) 30 cm 62180

The second volume of THE ELLINGTON ERA parallels the first (CBS 62178, 78 80), yet the years under inspection here are so richly productive that even this must not be regarded as Columbia's final word on a vital period in Duke Ellington's remarkable career. Still more of much value remains to be re-issued, as compositions and his band's interpretations were of great variety, and they appealed to a great variety of audience tastes, just as they do today. So this volume seeks to provide, like the first, a kind of panorama of Ellington music in the years before 1940. Alone or together, the two sets certainly confirm the truth of Sonny Greer's observation elsewhere in this booklet to the effect that "the band was getting bigger and climbing all through the Thirties."

The band's climb to the jazz zenith was arduous and not uncomplicated by sorrow, facts that are often reflected in the music. Sturdy constitutions and resilient temperaments were required to make the ascent, to suffer its checks and reversals and then to press on again, not unfurled or unshaken, but determined. In its peculiar fashion, it was a loyal and dedicated company. An individual might occasionally choose an inviting detour, but once under way few were left permanently behind, and then usually because of ill health.

A roughly chronological approach to the recorded output lends a telescopic aspect to Duke Ellington's progress. It is easy to see how one phase grew out of another, how the distinct tonal characteristics of additional musicians were used in new coloristic devices and ensemble blends, how ideas found in one performance were polished and refined in another, how the orchestrations became more complex and the harmonic structures richer, and how the personalities of his great soloists matured and developed. This is intriguing material for analysis, but in a sense it is superficial. The hard core, the Ellington essence, is as present on the first record of this album as it is on the last, as it is on the one he made only yesterday—or today. The resolve, the capacity for work and the ability to overcome problems and endure vicissitudes are uncredited for many years—and perhaps unrecognized because of the insouciant exterior he presented to the world. Yet despite the major talents and unique characters employed in it, all of this music is dominated, in one way or another, by the personality and taste of one man, a giant of jazz and twentieth-century music, Duke Ellington.

ALL GOD'S CHILLUN GOT RHYTHM has been included for the benefit of those who fondly remember the band's appearance in the Marx Brothers film "A Day at the Races." Ivie Anderson sings and so—even more lyrically—does Johnny Hodges on alto.

DUK ON THE DESERT was an attempt, the composer explains, to capture a sound representative of "the jazz over the desert sands at sunset." The muted trumpets are given an extremely responsible role throughout. After the theme statement by Wallace Jones, Duke's writing for the three horn section—about which Bigard improvises gracefully—is particularly ingenious. The curtains of night fall abruptly, as on the desert, in the powerful finale.

STEPPING INTO SWING SOCIETY is an example Duke claims, of what happens "when you set out to write a popular song and restrain yourself deliberately. On paper it's pretty as a bitch, well-organized and neat, but it doesn't necessarily click. This didn't." The instrumental version presented here affords, of course, no opportunity for judging Henry Nemo's lyrics, but it remains an easily swinging jazz piece with some performance with few exceptions by the muted brass. The Hodges soprano is heard leading the reeds and, briefly, in solo. Harry Carney also steps out with his commanding baritone.

PYRAMID is one of Duke's knowing ventures into the exotic. Tizol's influence is very audible, not only in his own playing, and it is Boston's pride, Harry Carney, who speaks most firmly here in the music. Stay. The hand-drumming at beginning and end is by Duke himself. "This was the first time we used a hand drum," he says, "before congas and bongos. We made it out of a tambourine—without the tunkles—and a cardboard cylinder. Gene Krupa came by one night and saw it, and next thing everybody in his band was using one like it."

A GYPSY WITHOUT A SONG demonstrates Duke's deft, sure touch in the creation and maintenance of a melancholy mood. Tizol's is the melodic backdrop; Cootie Williams' breaks and eight-bar solo have, from a jazz viewpoint, a majestic finality, while the sixteen bars played by Johnny Hodges have surely been seldom equaled for serene beauty on the alto saxophone.

DINAH'S IN A JAM is a swinging excursion on a familiar harmonic base. Stewart, Brown, and Bigard are the soloists, the last, like a new New Orleans clarinetist, embroidering with great address over the recurring riff patterns.

BUFFET FLAT is another skillfully organized performance, one in which Carney and Stewart are the stars. "A buffet flat," Duke explains, "is a way of saying 'a vacationing in his train'—an after-hour joint, but on a higher plane than most."

OLD KING DOOJIE celebrates the prowess of the King of Dooplind, whoever and wherever he may be. The vigorous ensembles are punctuated with authority by Sonny Greer, and there is a stirring sixteen-bar chase by Hodges and Williams.

FUSSY WILLOW (Salix edulis), a small American willow with silky pubescence) is another elegant swinger, done with such taste and musical development as no other writer of the period could approach. The orchestra's dynamics and internal balance are fully equal to the demands of arrangement. Williams, Brown, Hodges and Bigard are featured.

SOMETHING TO LIVE FOR is one of the great numbers. Duke says, "and the first collaboration with Billy Strayhorn." It introduces Jean Eldridge, an affecting singer from Pittsburgh, as Buffalo and an Ellington discovery of real talent. Wallace Jones, Tizol and Hardwicke are heard individually, but briefly, in the first chorus.

WAY LOW, a blue mood in a minor key, has some starkly effective backgrounds for the solo statements of Carney, Bigard, Brown and Stewart, the last of whom makes very appealing and personal use of the mule. This exceptionally moving Ellington essay in blues feeling has never received its due recognition.

I'M CHECKING OUT GOOMBYE is a bouncing vehicle for Ivie Anderson, who sings a very nonchalant song of dismissal and farewell. "The story is in the lyrics," Duke says, though Nanton's plunger-muted horn in the opening chorus suggests that there was another side to it. Bigard is on hand for the perfect embellishment of the storming ensembles.

SERENADE TO SWEDEN was one result of the band's triumphant Swedish tour in 1939. In appreciation of his reception by the people and the country, Duke wrote this pleasing, leisurely melody. "It was a happy time," he remembers, "and I wrote a whole lot of music. I was with the band for the first time. I met Wallace Jones, the lead trumpet, Nanton, Carney and Brown are the soloists."

LITTLE POSEY, his nickname, is the official portrait of Freddy Jenkins, whose character is delineated by the buoyant, muted trumpets, with Lawrence Brown as chief soloist, and in brief comments from Duke, Bigard, Carney and Nanton.

WE'LLY was a first nickname bestowed on Billy Strayhorn, to whom this number was dedicated shortly after he joined Duke's organization as composed, arranger and occasional pianist. Later, the band's handling of "Sweet Pea" was a masterpiece of half-valved technique, is tastefully employed, and Harry Carney's mule is played with his usual warmth and robust force.

TOTIN' THROUGH THE ROOF was written for Rex Stewart and Cootie Williams. "They keep going," Duke explains, "up and up, until they go through the roof." Carney, Williams, Brown and Hodges are heard in the first two choruses before the trumpets take over. The third is a chase in two-bar phrases, Stewart leading and Williams following. "I always used to have in Harlem. It was an after-hour joint, but on a higher plane than most."

In the twelve years that elapsed between "Down in Our Alley Blues" and "Totin' Through the Roof," Duke Ellington covered a lot of ground, literally and musically. He was the most daring and inventive of all the arrangers and composers in jazz. In Johnny Hodges, Harry Carney, Barney Bigard, Tricky Sam Nanton, Lawrence Brown, Bubber Miller, Cootie Williams and Rex Stewart, he employed some of the greatest talents in the field. He brought out the best in them and incorporated it in his music, the individuality of their work shining through. Yet no matter how strong their personalities, he was stronger. This collection, representative of the first phase of his career, testifies to that. He was the boss, the leader in the most consistently creative enterprise jazz has ever known.

Stanley Dance