



THE DUKE ELLINGTON STORY

volume **3**

part:1

I Let a Song Go out of my Heart

part:2

Something to Live For

1927-1939



The Duke Ellington story 1927-1939



Duke Ellington (piano); Fred Coy (guitar); Barney Bigard, Johnny Hodges, Otto Hardwick, Harry Carney (sax); Irie Anderson (vocal); Costie Williams, Rex Stewart, Arthur Whetzel (trumpets); Joe Nanton, Juan Tizol, Lawrence Brown (trombones); Hayes Albin, Bill Taylor (bass); Sonny Greer (drums)

Irie Anderson (vocal); Duke Ellington (piano); Freddy Jenkins, Costie Williams, Arthur Whetzel (trumpets); Otto Hardwick, Harry Carney, Johnny Hodges (sax); Joe Nanton, Juan Tizol, Lawrence Brown (trombones); Fred Coy (guitar); Wilbur Ibaad (bass); Sonny Greer (drums)



DUKE ELLINGTON BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

- 1899 Born April 29, Washington, D.C.; Christian Edward Kennedy. Father - James Edward Ellington (1879-1917) - was barber, later *Navy Superintendent*; by trade. Mother - Daisy Kennedy Ellington (1879-1935).
- 1907 "Nicknamed" "Duke" bestowed by Washingtonian neighbors.
- 1914-17 Attended Armstrong High School, Washington, working "after hours" as soda jerk at *Poodle Dog Cafe*. First composition, *Soda Fountain Rag*, 1914.
- 1916-22 Harpist piano, semi-professionally at first, with Louis Thomas; later with Russell Wadding. *Doc Perry etc.* Formed own gig band, including Otto Hardwick, Arthur Whetzel, Elmer Swenson. *Married Ethia Thompson*; Washington.
- 1919 Son, Mercer, born.
- 1922 Joined *Wilbur Sweatman in New York*.
- 1923 Formed Washingtonians. *Played first important New York date at Fostoria Club.*
- 1924 *Bubber Miley joined Washingtonians.*
- 1926 "Tribe Son" and *Harry Carney join Ellington Orchestra.*
- 1927 *Ellington Orchestra opens Cotton Club, New York.*
- 1928 *Male "Black And Tan Fantasy"*, musical sketch for R.K.O. *Barney Bigard and Johnny Hodges join Ellington.*
- 1930 *Featured in R.K.O. picture - "Check And Double Check"*. Shared billing with *Maurice Chevalier at Fulton Theatre, New York.*
- 1931 *Touring on Paramount, Warner Brothers, and R.K.O. circuits.*
- 1933 *First European tour: Britain, France.*
- 1934 *Appeared in two films - "Makin' It The Yankies" and "Hell Of The Nineties."*
- 1935 *Solitude won ASCAP Award for outstanding song of the year.*
- 1937 *Caravan won ASCAP Award for outstanding song of the year.*
- 1938 *Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart won ASCAP Award for outstanding song of the year.*
- 1939 *Second European tour: France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden. Billy Strayhorn and Johnny Hodges join Ellington.*

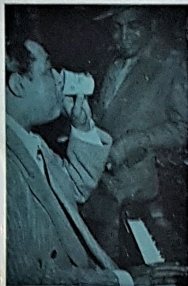
About the record. . . .

ALTHOUGH HE HAS NEVER written a fashionable "hit" song - indeed, the writing of deliberately commercial song hits has never been his general intention - Duke Ellington has given the music world a sizeable collection of charming and memorable tunes which, by virtue of their perennial appeal, have been absorbed into the standard repertoire of popular music and have held their position throughout the years alongside the most cherished souvenirs of Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, and the late George Gershwin. Duke's successes in the popular song field have almost always originated in his extensive orchestral repertoire: on notably few occasions - and these much later than the period covered by the present collection - has Ellington set out to write a song expressly for popular consumption. In almost every instance the item made first appearance as a band vehicle, with lyrics added at a later date in order to widen and enhance its commercial potential. *Solitude*, *Sophisticated Lady*, *I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart*, and *Caravan* all followed this pattern of evolution, as did such subsequent successes as *Costie's Concerto (Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me)*, *Never No Lament (Don't Get Around Much Any More)*, and many others.

Duke Ellington is a born tune-maker. His melodies have an intrinsically recognisable and quite distinctive quality - a personal quality apparent even in his treatment of the quasi-traditional twelve bar blues. And since, in many cases, his melodic themes are the result of happy collaboration with his musicians - often, indeed, inspired by a chance chorus or telling phrase - they manage to convey an improvisatory feeling which is of special appeal to jazz lover and player alike, and which is of course lacking in the work of song-writers even of the stature of Porter, Berlin, and Gershwin.

Sophisticated Lady, for example, was originally conceived as a vehicle for the "sweet" solo styles of Otto Hardwick on alto saxophone and Lawrence Brown on trombone. Yet their association with this title is so intimate that it is difficult to say how far they influenced its actual melodic shape or subsequent treatment. In *A Sentimental Mood* is again a piece inspired by the honeyed tones of Messrs. Hardwick and Brown - offset in this present arrangement by the spiritual phrasing of Rex Stewart's trumpet solo . . . a typical example of Ellington's use of contrasting sweet and pungent tonalities.

In its original treatment - as recorded on January 10, 1934 - *Solitude* was a mood piece with emphasis on warmly scored reed passages and featuring Armstrongesque trumpet



Duke Ellington and his disciple Billy Strayhorn



Ellington's trombone section: Jet Nanton, Juan Tizol, and Lawrence Brown



The Duke and his pianist Fred Coy

work by Cootie Williams. In fact, Louis Armstrong himself recorded a highly satisfactory version of this title in 1935. The trumpet solo is missing from this present, second recording by Duke, but the middle section of the tune retains its Armstrong-like savour.

The influence of Johnny Hodges is equally evident in *I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart*. This is a melody custom tailored for the Hodges saxophone, and when he takes the exposition of the theme on alto the listener might be forgiven for supposing this to be yet further evidence of the redoubtable Rabbit's melodic improvisation. Harry Carney's baritone sax, Lawrence Brown's trombone, and Barney Bigard's clarinet - "soaring like a falcon against the cliffs of brass," to quote Stanley Dance in another context - also contribute to this fine performance of one of Ellington's most effective excursions into the thirty-two bar song form.

Juan Tizol, that meticulous valve trombonist from Puerto Rico, responsible for the introduction of a number of similarly exotic titles to the Ellington library, is the official composer of *Catavani*. But whilst the theme might be Tizol's, its arrangement and setting - the utilisation of Cootie's grotesque wab-wah, of Bigard's luminous low register - reflect the master touch. In fact, this whole etude is still further reflection of the harmonious indivisibility of Duke and his collaborators.

It Don't Mean A Thing - the earliest piece in this selection - is a noteworthy and interesting recording. For this is the first Ellington composition destined for popular success which was recorded, for the first time, complete with "vocal chorus". The late Ivie Anderson was the singer, and, to paraphrase John Donne, she and Duke were "one another's best." The subtle and beautiful brass writing and playing are typical of the period. Hodges and "Ticky Sam" Nanton are the chief soloists.

OUR SECOND SELECTION is subtitled: "Something To Live For" - called from the piece which first brought a youthful Billy Strayhorn to Ellington's attention and thus sparked off one of the most fruitful musical associations in the Duke Ellington story. And indeed it was something to have lived for... to have nurtured a jazz band to the peak of perfection enjoyed by the Ellington Orchestra in the closing 'Thirties, or to have been witnesses to this phenomenon. Our curtain rises on that remarkable brotherhood of blues

- *Crescendos and Diminuendos in Blue*, and we quote Hugues Panassié: "During the years Duke has become increasingly daring and... has even gone so far as to use the traditional twelve bar blues to create ensembles of the strangest harmonies. But curiously enough he does not entirely leave the harmonic 'climate' of the blues. Such is the case with his amazing *Diminuendos in Blue* and *Crescendos in Blue*".

Yet another blues, *Blue Light* - an intimate and soul-warming piece of jazz chamber music - is palpably by the same hand as *Mood Indigo*, conceived almost a decade earlier. Equally, it is merely a sketch for the subsequent, more elaborate *Dusk*, recorded in 1940. Thus, as in all things, one may trace the wholly logical development of this master jazzman... who sets his own standards, his own rate of progress, without reference to fashion's style or the critic "over his shoulder". *Blue Light* and *Doji Woji* both showcase the often underrated Ellington piano. As a virtuoso soloist, it is true, Duke is not of the first rank. But as an ensemble player and accompanist he has few peers. The lilting keyboard pattern in *Blue Light* illuminates the entire performance, whilst in *Doji Woji* - as near as Duke came to utilising a boogie-woogie rhythm - his unaccented triplet pattern provides an unruffled yet slightly sinister foundation for a magnificently atmospheric recording. Only a section of the full front line takes part in this performance: two saxophones, trumpet, and trombone. Johnny Hodges contributes a glorious lead voice in the ensemble passages, and is equally glorious in his solo choruses. Cootie Williams - ever a master of the plunger mute - grows with a controlled frenzy which challenges the memory of the more primitive Bubber Miley.

Grierin' is one of Billy Strayhorn's earliest contributions to the Ellington repertoire, and is evidence of how deeply the young disciple has assimilated the master's feeling and technique. It is also, clearly, a melody inspired by the saxophone playing of Johnny Hodges, who shares solo honours with Cootie Williams in this performance.

But it is only when we come to compare the "New" *East St. Louis Toodle-oo* with the original conception of this work - recorded a full ten years earlier - that we can appreciate the most remarkable of all Ellingtonian phenomena: though outwardly so much has changed, the inner feeling and meaning of the music is untouched by time. We have come full cycle.

COMPILED AND ANNOTATED BY DENIS PRESTON



Johnny Hodges, contributor of glorious leading voices and solo choruses...



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Side 1

THE DUKE ELLINGTON STORY - Vol. 3

I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart

It don't mean a thing (Ellington/Mills)
Sophisticated lady (Ellington/Mills/Parish)
Solitude (Ellington/De Lange/Mills)

I let a song go out of my heart (Ellington/Nemo/Mills/Redmond)
In a sentimental mood (Ellington/Mills/Kuriz)
Caravan (Ellington/Mills/Tisol)



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Side 2

THE DUKE ELLINGTON STORY - Vol. 3

Something To Live For

Crescendo in blue (Ellington/Hodges)
Diminuendo in blue (Ellington/Hodges)
Blue light (Ellington)

Dojo! wooji! (Ellington)
Grievin' (Strayhorn/Ellington)
The new East St. Louis toodle-oo (Ellington)



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The Duke Ellington story - Part III

1927—1939

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The Duke Ellington story 1927-1939

SIDE I "I LET A SONG GO OUT OF MY HEART"

- (A) **It Don't Mean A Thing** (Ellington, Mills)
Recorded February 2, 1932
- (B) **Sophisticated Lady** (Ellington, Mills, Parish)
Recorded May 16, 1933
- (C) **Solitude** (Ellington, de Lange, Mills)
Recorded September 12, 1934
- (D) **I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart** (Ellington, Nemo, Mills, Redmond) Recorded March 3, 1938
- (E) **In A Sentimental Mood** (Ellington, Mills, Kurtz)
Recorded April 30, 1935
- (F) **Caravan** (Ellington, Mills, Tizol)
Recorded May 14, 1937

SIDE II "SOMETHING TO LIVE FOR"

- (F) **Crescendo In Blue** (Ellington, Hodges)
- (G) **Diminuendo In Blue** (Ellington, Hodges)
Recorded September 20, 1937
- (G) **Blue Light** (Ellington)
- (G) **Dooj Woobj** (Ellington)
Recorded December 22, 1938
- (H) **Grievin'** (Ellington, Strayhorn)
Recorded October 14, 1939
- (E) **The New East St. Louis Toodle-Oo** (Ellington)
Recorded March 5, 1937

PERSONNEL

(A) Arthur Whetzel, Freddy Jenkins, Costie Williams - trumpets; Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton, Lawrence Brown - trombones; Johnny Hodges - alto and soprano saxes; Harry Carey - alto and baritone saxes and clarinet; Barney Bigard - clarinet and tenor sax; Duke Ellington - piano; Fred Coy - guitar; William Brand - bass; Sonny Greer - drums. Ivey Anderson - vocal.
(B) As (A). Add Juan Tizol (trombone) and Otto Hardwick (alto, soprano and baritone sax).

(C) Wallace Jones, Costie Williams, Harold Baker, Rex Stewart - trumpets; Lawrence Brown, Joe Nanton, Juan Tizol - trombones; Otto Hardwick, Johnny Hodges, Harry Carey, Barney Bigard - reeds; Duke Ellington - piano; Fred Coy - guitar; Ivey Alevi and Billy Taylor - basses; Sonny Greer - drums.

(D) Charlie Allen, Costie Williams, Rex Stewart - trumpets; Lawrence Brown, Joe Nanton, Juan Tizol - trombones; Otto Hardwick, Johnny Hodges, Harry Carey, Barney Bigard - reeds; Duke Ellington - piano; Fred Coy - guitar; William Brand - bass; Freddy Armstrong - drums.

(E) As (C). Delete Harold Baker (trumpet).

(F) As (E). Delete Juan Tizol (trombone) and Ivey Alevi (bass).

(G) As (C). Delete Harold Baker (trumpet) and Ivey Alevi (bass).

(H) As (G). Jimmy Blanton replaces Billy Taylor (bass).

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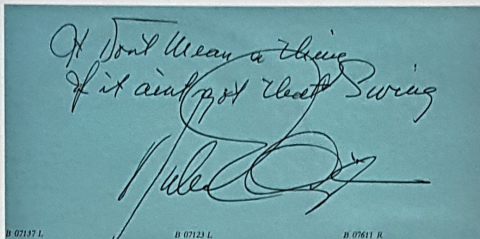
B 07278 L
Such Sweet Thunder



B 07253 L
A Drum Is A Woman



B 07606 R
Mood Ellington



B 07197 L
Blue Rags



B 07123 L
Mood Indigo



B 07611 R
Liberias Suite



B 07608 L
Ellington Uptown



B 07182 L
Ellington At Newport



B 07357 L
Black, Brown and Beige



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