

AIRCHECK [®] 4

DUKE ELLINGTON REMITTED
July 26, 1962
August 15, 1962

"The Duke Is On The Air"

DUKE ELLINGTON

**AT THE
BLUE NOTE
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS**

Reproduction
and Sale
Without the Elmer
Kleinman



AIRCHECK #4



DUKE ELLINGTON

at the

BLUE NOTE

August 13, 1952

Made in Canada

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DUKE ELLINGTON

at the

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July 30, 1952

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"The Duke Is On The Air ~ From the Blue Note"

Side 1 July 30, 1952

1. "Personality"
2. "All of Me" Betty Roche—vocal
3. "Bakitt" (tango)
4. "The Hawk Talks"
5. "Do Nothin' Til You Hear From Me" Jimmy Grissom—vocal
6. "VlPs Boogie"
7. "Jam With Sam"
8. "Just A Sittin' And A Rockin'" Ray Nance—vocal
9. "Mood Indigo" (theme closing) (partial)

AN INTRODUCTION

For Duke Ellington, 1952 was a special year. It marked his Silver Anniversary to the band business. (Actually, it was 25 years in the hot that Irving Mills registered the deal that brought Duke & his Orchestra into the Cotton Club on 143rd Street & Lenox Avenue in Harlem where the band instantly created a sensation. Their particular feeling began a saga that was to finish in a sensational review for America's greatest composer and bandleader.) The year's action was dominated by a tribute concert at Carnegie Hall on September 14. The concert was not the typical anniversary affair that presented only the Ellington Orchestra, but also included an Ad-hoc Cast of jazz giants such as Sonny Greer, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie and Billie Holiday.

During the year Duke and his Orchestra made three successful appearances at the Blue Note, a Chicago bistro located in Madison near Dearborn. First invited to guest jazz and was listed as the "House for Madmen." (Louis Armstrong and the Allstars had preceded the Ellington Orchestra and closed on July 26. Three weeks later on August 15, the newly formed Benny Goodman Sextet followed the Duke at the Blue Note.)

THE ORCHESTRA

The Ellington Orchestra of 1952 was a meticulously jelling, happy, entertaining and exciting group that produced the best in literature and discable jazz. The personnel had remained quite stable during the year. There were three major changes that saw Jimmy Grissom join as new male vocalist. Betty Roche had returned after a few years absence for post graduate work in the school of Ellington. Both these performers again brought good taste and vocal stability to the band. Milton Jefferson took Parker's place in the reed section on lead alto and made "Too hot to handle" with his fluid flowing yet superbly accented style.

The following were those present during the broadcast:

TRUMPETS: Clark Terry, Melvin Gault, Ray Nance, Cat Anderson.
TROMBONES: Quentin Jackson, Juan Tizol, Britt Woodman.
SAXOPHONES: Milton Jefferson, Jimmy Harrison, Russell Procope, Paul Gonsky, Terry Carter.
PIANO: Duke Ellington.
BAJO: Wendell Mitchell.
DRUMS: Louis Bellson.

THE BROADCASTS

One of the many interesting features of the Blue Note was that a live on NBC live that allowed the current artist a 30 minute broadcast every Wednesday evening. This feature contained the first and last of the Ellington Orchestra's three Wednesday sessions. The two broadcasts are exactly complete and include commentary by the Duke (partial).

Side One July 30, 1952

The first side opens with the traditional theme, **TAKE THE TRAIN** with a few introductory comments by the NBC announcer. **PERSONALITY**, named for a disc jockey friend of Duke's, was recorded and presented straight ahead solo by Paul Gonsky. Clark Terry, Jimmy Harrison and the hornbushes driving beat of Louis Bellson. Duke first recorded this composition eight months earlier in December 1, 1951. It has remained one of the most obviously recorded Ellington compositions. The December 1951/52 recording was **ALL OF ME** sung by Betty Roche. Here, center and into the vocal spotlight. She admirably displays a great ability to swing in this common version. Duke paid calls for a large team from first chair percussionists Louis Bellson to introduce various Ray Nance on cello and composer Juan Tizol with his rich voice introduce in the exotic **BAKITTI**. **THE HAWK TALKS**, an original Raymon composition, continues the broad cast. It features the composer playing the opening melody theme, joined by Wendell Mitchell's bass playing a counter melody, and finally "the great player who moves in to lead the show", Cat Anderson concludes with some high note improvising. **DO NOTHING TILL YOU HEAR FROM ME** was originally recorded on November 28, 1947 with a 14 piece band. This version Jimmy Harrison does a rich, well-phased interpretation of this Ellington standard. The recording **VlPs BOOGIE** is combined with the jump song **JAM WITH SAM**. The first features the rich dark tone of Harry Carter's baritone saxophone, and the pretty rhythmic clarinet of Jimmy Harrison. The latter is a few bars before the band to stretch out and present some of its many fine sections. After Milton Gault's opening melody, Paul Gonsky with the fluid drum style leads the first to participate. He is followed by a brief and driving statement from transcendent Britt Woodman. Russell Procope continues the proceedings with some harsh saxophone from his alto. To reward leads with Cat Anderson's sharp hitting off a solo. Quentin Jackson quickly follows with some plunger action characteristic of the "Tiger" Sonny Greer. The crisp trumpet of Clark Terry drops in its delightful tremolo and takes the lead theme before becoming involved in a short dialogue with Cat Anderson after concluding segment 1. "C above C above C". Ray Nance, a true crowd center, next steps to the microphone and "bubbling vocal" or rather one adages himself in a bit of vocal and choreographed rhytming" in a strong **JUST A SITTIN' AND A ROCKIN'**. The first chorus is by the workhorse Paul Gonsky. The original version of June 15, 1951 named the great Sonny Greer but was strictly an instrumental. The broadcast concludes with a partial **MOOD INDIGO** as signal.

Side Two August 13, 1952

The second broadcast again opens with the **TAKE THE TRAIN** theme. The first selection brings in a new Ray Nance to the microphone for the "vocal and choreographed responsibility" of **TULIP OR TURNIP**. This piece was originally a popular melody tune for Ray and the Ellington band in the mid-fifties and was recorded first for Bluebird on December 11, 1948. Ray took steps and plays highly rhythmic on his spotlight number. **TING-A-LING** is another original piece by drummer Bellson and features the rhythm section and Paul Gonsky, since with its repeated note. The new beautiful **FLAMINGO** was first put on wax on December 26, 1940 with their album as recorded. Jimmy Harrison leads his warm improvisation of this standard in a new fashion. Willie Cook and Harry Carter split the instrumental refrain. The plastic cover book of the Duke's new program, the vintage **BOOK OF MARY TOL** which dates back to Duke's first decade in music—the 1930's. Solo are by Jimmy Harrison on trumpet, Quentin Jackson on trombone and Cat Anderson on trumpet. The improvisation by **SOPHISTICATED LADY** features again Harry Carter on tenor clarinet in a beautiful, beautiful solo and the sensitive Ray Nance on violin in what Duke would call an example of "improvising music". Billie Holiday's **TAKE THE TRAIN** captures the "vocal wonders" of Betty Roche. Truly, it is an unrecorded theme for the band. Mrs. Roche with her version accompanied by a band chorus. She had just recently received her single first single effort on June 26, while the band was playing in New York.

Racial discrimination seems to be common during the middle of the big bands, in most instances the "take off" was done in good taste and was a musical tribute to the particular leader. **FLYING HOME** and **Louis Hampton** are no exception. To introduce in this program is Duke's tribute to his fellow bandleader and friend. Solo came from the vibrant clarinet of Jimmy Harrison and the delicate horn of Clark Terry to support.

This **DUKE IS ON THE AIR ~ FROM THE BLUE NOTE** represents but a small sample of the "live" Ellington of the early fifties—a great period of Ellingtonia that has not been as well documented as vinyl. It is hoped that the national and worldwide attention to the subject that Duke Ellington's Orchestra in 1952 was not only a band that presented a wonderful collection of great and memorable music, but that it also had some really learned advice.

While writing these notes I receive word of Duke Ellington's death. This extraordinary talent will be sadly missed.

Wayne Kruger, May, 1974

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