

**Continuum**  
**THE DUKE ELLINGTON**  
**ORCHESTRA**  
*under the direction of*  
**MERCER ELLINGTON**





Fantasy

33]

(FT 529A)

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1



CONTINUUM

STEREO

FT 525

1

1. JUMP FOR JOY (Ellington—Webster—Kuller) Francis Day & Hunter Ltd.
2. BLACK AND TAN FANTASY (Ellington—Miloy) Lawrence Wright
3. WARM VALLEY (Ellington) Big 3 Music Ltd.
4. DROP ME OFF AT HARLEM (Ellington) Campbell Connelly & Co. Ltd.
5. ALL TOO SOON (Ellington) Francis Day & Hunter Ltd.
6. ROCK SKIPPIN' (AT THE BLUE NOTE) (Ellington—Strayhorn) United Artists Music Ltd.

DUKE ELLINGTON ORCHESTRA

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MERCER ELLINGTON

FACTORY SAMPLE

NOT FOR SALE

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CONTINUUM

STEREO

FT 525

2

1. JEEP'S BLUES (Ellington—Hodges) Mills Music Ltd.
2. NO-NO (Ellington) Robbins Music Co. Ltd.
3. CARNEY (Henderson) United Artists Music Ltd.
4. BLUE SERGE (Ellington) Campbell Connelly & Co. Ltd.
5. HAPPY GO LUCKY LOCAL (Ellington) United Artists Music Ltd.

DUKE ELLINGTON ORCHESTRA

UNDER DIRECTION OF  
MERCER ELLINGTON

161M

## GLENN RICHARDS

The cover artist: Reg Bandy (PhotoDisc)

FT 525

stereo

DC 062-96944

## Side 1:

1. Jump for Joy  
(Ellington-Wetzer-Kuller) 2:54
2. Black and Tan Fantasy  
(Ellington-Miley) 4:17
3. Warm Valley  
(Duke Ellington) 4:41
4. Drop Me Off at Harlem  
(Duke Ellington) 3:21
5. All Too Soon  
(Duke Ellington) 3:40
6. Rock Skippin' at the Blue Note  
(Duke Ellington-Billy Strayhorn) 2:25

## Side 2:

1. Jeep's Blues  
(Ellington-Hodges) 4:55
2. Ko-Ko  
(Duke Ellington) 2:46
3. Carney  
(Rick Henderson) 3:06
4. Blue Serge  
(Mercer Ellington) 5:03
5. Happy-Go-Lucky Local  
(Duke Ellington) 4:27

## MERCER ELLINGTON—conductor

Cootie Williams, James "Buddy" Bolden, Money Johnson, Barry Lee Hall, Calvin Ladner—trumpets  
 Chuck Connors, Vinco Prudente, Art Baron—trombones  
 Harold Minerve, Maurice Simon—alto saxophones  
 Harold Ashby, Ricky Ford, Anatole Gerasimov—tenor saxophones

Joe Temperley—baritone saxophone

Lloyd Meyers—piano

Edward Ellington II—guitar

J. J. Wiggins—bass

Freddie Waits—drums  
 (Chicago, January 6-7, 1975.)

On "Drop Me Off in Harlem" and "Blue Serge":

Williams, Bolden, Johnson, Hall—trumpets  
 Connors, Prudente, Baron—trombones  
 Minerve, James Spaulding—alto saxophones  
 Simon, Ashby—tenor saxophones  
 Harry Carney—baritone saxophone  
 Meyers—piano

Larry Ridley—bass

Rocky White—drums  
 (New York, July 17, 1974.)

On "Happy-Go-Lucky Local":

Williams, Bolden, Hall, Willie Singleton—trumpets  
 Connors, Prudente, Baron—trombones  
 Minerve, Simon—alto saxophones  
 Ford—tenor saxophone  
 Bill Easley—tenor saxophone, clarinet  
 Percy Marion—baritone saxophone  
 Meyers—piano  
 Edward Ellington II—guitar  
 Wiggins—bass  
 White—drums  
 (New York, May 12, 1975.)

Art direction—Phil Carroll

Cover photo—Moneta Sleet, Jr.  
 (courtesy of JET Magazine)

Liner photo—Phil Bray

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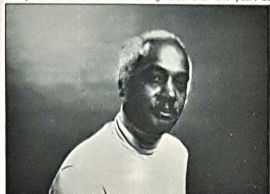


Fantasy

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The Duke Ellington orchestra has always been a changing microcosm in which jazz elements—old and new—surface, fade, and reappear. The most profound disturbance in it occurred on May 24, 1974, when its prime creator, guide, piano player, conductor, arranger, and composer died. It had suffered grievous losses before when musicians such as Johnny Hodges, Tricky Sam Nanton, and Jimmy Blanton passed on, but none, of course, to compare with the loss of Duke Ellington himself.

Fortunately, he left a son thoroughly familiar with the traditions that had to be maintained. Moreover, there was a virtual treasure house of compositions and arrangements, many of which had become neglected over the years at



attention was lavished on the new favorite—the new baby, the new number written this morning to be played tonight.

Ellington was a prolific writer, and much of his inspiration came from his musicians, for whom he was always fashioning new vehicles and showcases. When, in the normal course of events, some of these men left him, or died, he would often retire the pieces he had written for them, either because he did not wish to be reminded of their loss, or because he did not find the musical personnel of their successors appropriate. In consequence, even masterpieces had a tendency to disappear from the band book.

Mercer Ellington took over at the helm the day after the funeral, when he and the band left for Bermuda to honor a previous commitment, just as his father would have done. He had serious personal problems, for not only the pianist had to be replaced. The bodies of Paul Gonzales and Tyree Glenn had both been lying in the same funeral home at the same time as that of the Maestro. These problems, and the grief, were staunchly faced, supported as he was by two pillars of the band, Harry Carney and Cootie Williams. What could not be foreseen at that point was that Carney, the most loyal of the loyal, also had only a few short months to live. After each sojourn in the hospital, he would hurry back to the band, looking if anything more youthful, to produce his rich, inimitable sound undiminished. In this album are both a feature for him from his last recording session, and a tribute to him played by his Scottish successor, Joe Temperley.

Cootie Williams, as the remaining veteran of the organization, felt an added sense of responsibility which, despite indifferent health, he characteristically accepted. In a brief speech at a luncheon honoring the band between the Chicago sessions, Cootie said: "It didn't work very hard while Duke was here, but now that he has gone I feel I have to."

The album opens energetically and confidently with "Jump for Joy," and immediately introduces the new blood in the persons of tenor saxophonist Ricky Ford and James Bolden, who takes care of the trumpet high notes. Bolden was inevitably nicknamed "Buddy" in memory of the legendary New Orleans musician of the same surname. Sitting next to him in the brass section on the Chicago dates was

Calvin Ladner, first cousin of another famous Louisianian, Tommy Ladnier, who graded so many classic blues records and was one of Fletcher Henderson's great stars.

"Black and Tan Fantasy" is played from Dick Vance's knowing arrangement of the Ellington-Miley masterpiece. The trio consists of Art Baron, Barry Lee Hall, and Cootie Williams, the last wielding plunger and derby mutes respectively before and after Maurice Simon's attractive alto saxophone variations.

Simon's section mate, "Gezeli" Minerve, is responsible for interpreting "Warm Valley," an Ellington number that Johnny Hodges immortalized. It is both a sympathetic remembrance and a personal statement. The solo trumpet is by Bolden.

"Drop Me Off at Harlem" was made at Harry Carney's last record session, and it is proof of how, to the very end, he continued to give the best of himself.

"All Too Soon," a strangely neglected Ellington number of exceptional quality on which Ben Webster originally played, here introduces Anatole Gerasimov on tenor saxophone. He had impressed the Maestro and Paul Gonzales when they heard him jamming in Leningrad during the band's tour of Russia for the U.S. State Department. Modest, but not at all nervous, he made several musicianly takes, all different, until he arrived at this one amid unanimous approval in the studio.

"Rock Skippin' at the Blue Note" is a lively Billy Strayhorn composition that makes a good showcase for Barry Lee Hall's equally lively and adventurous horn. His fellow Texan, Bolden, does the plunger work at the beginning.

"Jeep's Blues" was, of course, another of Johnny Hodges's hits. His success with ballads and lyrical numbers like "Warm Valley" caused many to forget that he was one of the greatest blues players jazz has known. Here his role is given to another master, Cootie Williams, who needed only one take for this definitive statement.

"Ko-Ko" derives from one of the peak years in the band's history, and Mercer Ellington was determined to restore it to a rightful position in the repertoire. The plunger tremor is by Art Baron, who also shows how tradition may be preserved. Noting Baron's resolutely brusque appearance, Mercer felt obliged to caution him before this take was made. "Don't let your beard get in the way," he said. It didn't. The clarinet is by Minerve.

"Carney" movingly expresses not only the affection and admiration of composer/saxophonist Rick Henderson (a former member of the band), but also of Harry Carney's successor. In tone and phrasing, Joe Temperley makes quite clear who his idol was.

"Blue Serge," written and arranged by Mercer Ellington in 1941, was another work that deserved more frequent performance. Roles played in the original version by Joe Tanton, Duke Ellington, and Ben Webster are here undertaken by Baron, Lloyd Meyers, and Harold Ashby. That Webster was Ashby's major inspiration is manifested in his warmly evocative exploration.

Finally, "The Happy-Go-Lucky Local" runs one more time. Most loved of all Duke's trains, it is set in motion by Mayer's appropriately bluesy piano, and the momentum is maintained by Ford, Mercer Ellington's young discovery. Exemplifying the continuum, he is from Boston, like some other great saxophonists, like Hodges and Carney. And in its rhythmic section there's the excellent bass playing of young Gerry Wiggins, son of the well-known pianist of the same name, not to mention the guitar of Edward Ellington II, Duke's grandson, who returns to us another tradition. Continuum.

—Stanley Dance

Stanley Dance is the author of *The World of Duke Ellington* (Scrivener's).