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Duke Ellington

and his orchestra



SKIN DEEP
(Featuring Louis Bellson, drum)
THE MOOCHE
TAKE THE "A" TRAIN
(Vocal by Betty Roche)
A TONE PARALLEL TO HARLEM
(The Harlem Suite)
PERDIDO

ELLINGTON UPTOWN



CBS

ORIGINATOR OF THE MODERN LONG PLAYING RECORD



CBS

ELLINGTON UPTOWN DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

SIDE 1

CBS 84309



33 T.

A

- 1 - **SKIN DEEP** (Bellson) 6'48
Featuring Louis Bellson, Down
Tempo Music, Inc.
- 2 - **THE MOOCHE** 6'36
(Ellington - J. Mills)
Gotham Music Service
- 3 - **TAKE THE "A" TRAIN** 8'00
Vocal by Betty Roche (Strayhorn)
Tempo Music, Inc.

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ELLINGTON UPTOWN DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

SIDE 2

CBS 84309



33 T.

B

- 1 - **A TONE PARALLEL TO HARLEM** 14'00
(The Harlem Suite) (Ellington)
Tempo Music, Inc.
- 2 - **PERDIDO** 8'25
(E. Drake - Lenk - Tizol)
Tempo Music, Inc.

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ELLINGTON UPTOWN
Duke Ellington



ELLINGTON UPTOWN

Skin Deep

The Mooche

Take the "A" Train

A Tone Parallel to Harlem

Perdido

DUKE ELLINGTON and his Orchestra

Once again Duke Ellington and his Orchestra present a program of full-length concert arrangements of some of their most popular numbers. Three of the numbers are substantial favorites among Ellington devotees, while two of them are relatively recent. Old or new, the same careful craftsmanship is evident in the expressive blend of sound, rhythm and melody that characterizes the Duke's work. Without ever making pretentious claims to officiating at the ridiculous marriage of popular and classical music, the Ellington orchestra nevertheless serves as an almost solitary ground where imaginative popular thought is controlled by classical traditions. In the development of an Ellington arrangement, no matter how exciting it becomes as it builds, is a classical precedent.

It has become fashionable, almost imperative, in recent years, for composers and arrangers of serious popular music to make sweeping bows to the work of Stravinsky, Milhaud, Ravel and various others of their respective schools, and this is a good thing, since almost all innovations in popular music were worked out classically by those composers. A good deal of nonsense has been written about progressive movements in popular music that can be stopped cold by even a cursory glance at a Stravinsky score. The point is that such influences are by no means new or original; Duke Ellington was using them and acknowledging them years before most of today's eager young innovators were able to beat out a tempo. Some time ago he listed as his favorite composers George Gershwin, Stravinsky, Debussy and Respighi, a group from which anyone can draw revealing conclusions.

In this particular collection, Ellington and his orchestra give brilliant full-length performances of a representative program, affording record collectors a chance to re-acquaint themselves with some of the impressive moments of Ellington concerts. Louis Bellson's *Skin Deep* is plainly and simply a rouser, displaying the kind of sharp, stimulating popular music the band can produce, and offering a fine showcase for Bellson's own remarkable drumming in an extended solo of rare excitement. *The Mooche*, which follows, is a shining example of the Duke's writing in 1929, refined and polished through the intervening years but never losing its essential period flavor; this is one of the unique facets of the Ellington band, that throughout changing styles and tastes, all encompassed in their arrangements, the basic originality of a composition is never obscured. An occasional echoing chord may be a concession to mid-century tastes, but they in no way obscure the growly atmosphere of a striking Ellington creation. His new setting of *Take the "A" Train* is not the well-remembered original, but one that blends elements of that classic with new ideas in an ever-interesting re-creation. The vocal, by Betty Roche, serves as a reminder that the pop influence has been more than passing, too.

In *A Tone Parallel to Harlem*, one of Ellington's more ambitious forms is demonstrated. The extended suite, most often depicting Harlem and its musical influences, is one of his favorite forms, and here again finds an agreeable and provocative expression. Long-time fans will remember *Black, Brown and Beige* and the *Liberian Suite*, among others in this rewarding group, and make their own comparisons. Among the most recent of Elling-

ton scores, *A Tone Parallel to Harlem* represents a summing-up to date of his musical experience, and lays it before the listener in a constantly invigorating pattern of sound. The program comes to a close with an extended arrangement of *Perdido*, a classic in the orchestra's book, now moving into its second decade as a must for any self-respecting group. Light and airy in its present treatment, it spot-lights some of the orchestra's star soloists in successive solos. Like practically everything else the orchestra plays, it has been subjected to constant re-arrangement and examination, and it is a safe guess that this will not be the final treatment, fine as it is.

For the continual revision of a score is also an Ellington trademark, along with precise musicianship and the inimitably mellow sound he educates from his orchestra. Almost every performance finds additions and subtractions, a constant experimentation to find the most expressive way of treating a number. This is not done in a class-room sort of way, but through group work; when an arrangement begins to sound worn to the orchestra, it is a fair chance that it will sound worn to its listeners, too, and the reworking begins, in earnest. The harmonies change, the rhythms change, even the tempo changes, and a new variation on the theme is the result.

The most important date in the Ellington chronology is December 4, 1927, when he and his then-new orchestra opened at the old Cotton Club in Harlem. At the time, Paul Whiteman was the King of Jazz (sic), and to the extent that Whiteman represented popular music, originality gasped for breath in what essentially was a pseudo-symphonic treatment of the business man's bounce. A lot of brilliant musicians evolved from this atmosphere, somehow, and if any single force can take the credit for the evolution, it would be Duke Ellington's orchestra. An audience which couldn't quite accept the roughness of a Bessie Smith or an Armstrong at the time was nevertheless ready to toss out the front-porch ballads and the dormitory novelties, and the blast of fresh air which Ellington and his men let in was a revelation. So caustic a critic as the late Constant Lambert was willing to cede Ellington an important place in the music of the Twenties, and subsequent writers have been no less generous. Since 1927 the Ellington orchestra has changed radically, and so has popular music, both influencing the other. The evidence of that change, and an exciting summation of it, is contained in this program. It remains only for the listener to absorb and enjoy it, surely one of the most agreeable pastimes available anywhere.

Personnel:—

Saxophones: Paul Gonsalves, Harry Carney, Jimmy Hamilton, Russell Procope, Hilton Jefferson
Trumpets: William Anderson, Clark Terry, Willie Cook, Ray Nance
Trombones: Juan Tizol, Quentin Jackson, Britt Woodman
Drums: Louis Bellson
Bass: Wendell Marshall
Piano: Billy Strayhorn and Duke Ellington

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