

The Essential
DUKE ELLINGTON

JANUARY 8th 1929 to APRIL 4th 1929

All instrumental recordings in chronological order



VJM TIMESPAN — THE LIVING HISTORY OF JAZZ

VJM

VINTAGE SERIES

VLP. 75
(VLP. 75-A)
MCPS

SIDE 1

© 1989
Mono

THE ESSENTIAL DUKE ELLINGTON 8.1.29 - 4.4.29

1. TIGER RAG Part 1 (La Rocca)(2:53)
2. TIGER RAG Part 1 (La Rocca)(2:52)
3. TIGER RAG Part 2 (La Rocca)(2:53)
4. FLAMING YOUTH (Ellington)(3:23)
5. SATURDAY NIGHT FUNCTION (Ellington/Bigard)(3:10)
6. HIGH LIFE (Ellington)(3:13)
7. DOIN' THE VOOM,VOOM (Ellington/Miley)(3:15)
8. JAPANESE DREAM (Fields/McHugh)(3:36)
9. HARLEMANIA (Fields/McHugh)(3:00)
10. RENT PARTY BLUES (Ellington)(3:31)

1,2,3 S.B.K. Partnership Ltd. 4,5,6,7 Bolwin Mills
8. L. Wright Music Co Ltd. 9,10 Copyright Control

MADE IN ENGLAND

ALL RIGHTS OF THE RECORD PRODUCER AND OF THE WORK REPRODUCED RESERVED COPYING PUBLIC PERFORMANCES AND BROADCASTING OF THIS RECORD PROHIBITED

VJM

VINTAGE SERIES

VLP. 75
(VLP. 75-B)
MCPS

SIDE 2

© 1989
Mono

THE ESSENTIAL DUKE ELLINGTON 8.1.29 - 4.4.29.

1. PADUCAH (Redman)(2:34)
2. HARLEM FLAT BLUES (Ellington)(3:12)
3. THE DICTY GLIDE (Ellington)(3:16)
4. HOT FEET (Fields/McHugh)(2:38)
5. SLOPPY JOE (Bigard)(3:14)
6. STEVEDORE STOMP (Ellington/Mills)(2:47)
7. SARATOGA SWING (Bigard)(2:51)
8. WHO SAID "IT'S TIGHT LIKE THAT"? (Ellington)(3:00)
9. I MUST HAVE THAT MAN (Fields/McHugh)(3:23)
10. FREEZE AN' MELT (Fields/McHugh)(2:54)

1,2,3,5,6 Bolwin Mills 4,9,10 L. Wright Music Co Ltd.
7 Mills Music Co Copyright Control

MADE IN ENGLAND

ALL RIGHTS OF THE RECORD PRODUCER AND OF THE WORK REPRODUCED RESERVED COPYING PUBLIC PERFORMANCES AND BROADCASTING OF THIS RECORD PROHIBITED

"THE ESSENTIAL DUKE ELLINGTON" (January 8th 1929 to April 4th 1929)

VLP.75 (mono)

(mono)

Side 1

1. TIGER RAG - Part 1 (a) E-28940 A (La Rocca) 2:53
2. TIGER RAG - Part 1 (a) E-28940 B (La Rocca) 2:52
3. TIGER RAG - Part 2 (a) E-28911 A (La Rocca) 2:53
4. FLAMING YOUTH (b) 49652-2 (Ellington) 3:23
5. SATURDAY NIGHT FUNCTION (b) 49653-2 (Ellington, Bigard) 3:10
6. HIGH LIFE (b) 49654-1 (Ellington) 3:13
7. DOIN' THE VOOM VOOM (b) 49655-2 (Ellington, Miley) 3:15
8. JAPANESE DREAM (c) 48373-2 (Fields, McHugh) 3:36
9. HARLEMANIA (c) 48374-1 (Fields, McHugh) 3:00
10. RENT PARTY BLUES (d) E-29381-A (Ellington) 3:31

Personnels and recording dates:

(a) DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS COTTON CLUB ORCHESTRA:
Duke Ellington (piano, arranger), Bubler Miley, Arthur Whetsel, Freddy Jenkins (trumpets), Joe Nanton (trombone), Johnny Hodges (clarinet, soprano sax, alto sax), Harry Carney (clarinet, alto sax, baritone sax), Barney Bigard (clarinet, tenor sax), Fred Guy (bano), Wellman Braud (string bass), Sonny Greer (drums).
Recorded in New York on January 8th, 1929

(b) DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS COTTON CLUB ORCHESTRA:
Personnel as (a). Greer plays chimneys on "High Life".
Recorded in New York on January 16th, 1929

(c) DUKE ELLINGTON'S ORCHESTRA:
Ellington (piano, arranger), Whetsel, Jenkins, Coote Williams (trumpets), Nanton (trombone), Hodges (clarinet, soprano sax, alto sax), Carney (clarinet, alto sax, baritone sax), Guy (bano), Braud (string bass), Greer (drums).
Recorded in New York on February 18th, 1929

Once again, as with the last volume (VLP74), around three months of Ellington's recorded history is represented here. Even so, this is a rich and varied programme, with a most adventurous repertoire beginning to take shape.

To continue the Brunswick session of January 1929. For the first and only time, the orchestra records "Tiger Rag", although Ellington had used the chords as a basis for composition in the past. Both "The Creeper" (VLP71) and "Hot and Bothered" (VLP74) were examples of this, and as we shall soon discover, more was to come. Originally issued as a double-sided 10" 78, an innovation for 1929, it appeared twice in this country, first on British Brunswick 3956, and some years later on Warner Brunswick 01358. Each issue contained a different take of Part one, 3956 being the rarer of the two. Both are included here. The lightweight arrangement allows plenty of scope for the soloists. In order of appearance, they are Bigard, Jenkins, Carney, Hodges, Miley, Nanton and Bigard again. The takes of part one are very different, with Bigard being particularly inventive.

The Victor session from only eight days later is brilliantly performed, recorded, and is also Miley's last session with the orchestra. Some time later he was to join the society dance orchestra of Leo Reisman, but that's another story. "Flaming Youth" sparkles from start to finish. Miley takes the first solo, with a brief bridge passage from Nanton. On the solos of Hodges and Nanton, this same passage is taken in each case by Whetsel. "Saturday Night Function", an Ellington-Bigard collaboration, is a sixteen bar theme, going into twelve bars for the solos of Bigard, Whetsel and Nanton. Hodges is to be heard briefly during the opening and closing statements. "High Life" brings back those "Tiger Rag" chords again. Solos by Bigard (like the similarity in the Brunswick "Rent" part one take) Al Jenkins, Nanton and Greer on chimnes. Both Hodges and Carney also heard briefly during the ensemble chorus "Doin' The Voom Voom" follows the same solo sequence as the earlier version (VLP74) as follows: Miley, Hodges, Miley, Whetsel (bridge passage), Miley, Carney/ Nanton (both), Miley, Ellington, Bigard and Miley. One final treat on this session: The New York Victor engineers did a wonderful job in recording Braud's powerful bass walk, enhancing an already great Ellington recording session.

Another Victor session, from just over a month later, provides two very contrasting performances. "Japanese Dream" from the Mel High Fields partnership, is a pretty mellow, and Ellington wisely lets it stand as such. Solos by Whetsel and Bigard. "Harlemania" is a different story, with solos by Nanton, Carney, Jenkins, Hodges and Bigard. A great stomping performance, and if you close your eyes, you can almost imagine that line of Cotton Club chorus girls.

Just eleven days on, the orchestra was back in the Brunswick recording studios for three more titles. "Rent Party Blues" is dominated by the power and invention of Johnny Hodges on soprano saxophone. Other solos are by Whetsel and Nanton, but Hodges is superb, sweeping all before him. Surprisingly, this composition by Hodges and Ellington came to

Sheets Design: Stephen Hill, Danny Robins (from an idea by Steve Lane)
Sleeve Note: George Ellis
Remastering: John Wadley

Side 2

1. PADUCAH (d) E-29382-A (Don Redman) 2:34
2. HARLEM FLAT BLUES (d) E-29383-A (Ellington) 3:12
3. THE DICTY GLIDE (c) 48467-2 (Ellington) 3:16
4. HOT FEET (c) 49768-2 (Fields, McHugh) 2:38
5. SLOPPY JOE (c) 49769-2 (Bigard) 3:14
6. STEVEDORE STOMP (c) 49770-2 (Ellington, Mills) 2:47
7. SAHATOGA SWING (f) 3713 C (Bigard) 2:51
8. WHO SAID IT'S TIGHT LIKE THAT? (g) 3714 A (Ellington) 3:00
9. I MUST HAVE THAT MAN (g) 148170-3 (Fields, McHugh) 3:23
10. FREEZE AND MELT (g) 148171-1 (Fields, McHugh) 2:54

(b) THE JUNGLE BAND:
Personnel as (c). Recorded in New York on March 1st 1929

(c) DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS COTTON CLUB ORCHESTRA:
Personnel as (a). Whetsel and Nanton omitted on "Sloppy Joe".
Recorded in New York on March 7th, 1929

(f) THE WASHINGTONIANS:
Ellington (piano, arranger), Coote Williams, Whetsel (trumpets), Bigard (clarinet), Hodges (clarinet, alto sax), Guy (bano), Braud (bass brass), Greer (drums). Vocal on "Who Said It's Tight Like That?" is by Coote Williams.
Recorded in New York about March 15th, 1929

(g) JOE TURNER AND HIS MEMPHIS MEN:
Personnel as (c). Recorded in New York on April 4th, 1929

light again in 1936, this time as "Spreadin' Knowledge Around" with composer credit going to Ben Pollack and Harry James. But then, a few months later, this same part took part of the "Rockin' in Rhythm" (as a basis for "Peckin'"). However, I'm digressing... back to the Brunswick session. "Paducah", a Don Redman composition, had already been recorded by the Chocolate Dandies for the previous Orchard (ORH 18627). The Ellington version allows solo space to Miley's replacement, Charles "Coote" Williams. He played much open trumpet during his early days with Ellington... and here shows a decided Armstrong influence. It has to be said that the Brunswick engineers were way behind Victor at this time, and Bigard's obligato to Williams is over modulated. Nanton is the other soloist. "Harlem Flat Blues" has twenty four bars each by Nanton and Bigard, the former at his most snazzy.

Another Victor session follows, from only six days later. Once again, the orchestra benefits from the superior recording techniques, and all four titles, never to be recorded again, are superb. Ellington leads into "The Dicty Glide", with Whetsel and Hodges leading most of the laid back tempo. Nanton has a short spot, with Hodges and Bigard running in an out during the final chorus. "Hot Feet" by Fields and McHugh, stomps along at a fast pace, with Bigard on tenor for the first chorus, Williams (alto) and Jenkins (tp) sharing the second, followed by Hodges, Nanton/Braud (both) and Bigard. "Sloppy Joe" with Greer's foxtrot doodling, is a blues, with five solos by Duke, Bigard and Williams. "Stevedore Stomp" is another of those impressive solos taken in order: Whetsel/Braud (both), Carney, Nanton (one of his greatest open solos), Bigard and Hodges.

The next two, made for the small Cameo company, and originally issued as by the Washingtonians, are little gems buried in surface noise. In spite of idiosyncratic linings to the canny, all I hear are a three piece front line plus flutters, with blues replacing string bass. "Saratoga Swing" a beautiful twelve bar blues, has impressive solos by Hodges, Williams and Bigard. "Who Said It's Tight Like That" is played at a jaunty march tempo, and the three soloists are again heard in the order: Williams is the soloist.

Finally, two titles made for Columbia, and issued under the name of Joe Turner and his Memphis Men. "I Must Have That Man", initially only released in England, stayed unissued in USA until the early fifties, and even then it was only a booklet issue. Whetsel plays the introduction, a badly balanced Nanton and Bigard share the first chorus, Duke contributes a weird and wonderful solo, and Carney takes the middle eight of the final chorus. "Freeze and Melt", another from Fields and McHugh, has the lullaby engineer back in control, with Braud's bass to the fore, sharing the first chorus with Bigard. Hodges plays the twenty four bar verse, leading to a chorus from Jenkins, Bigard again. Greer on chimnes, with Hodges again briefly towards the close.

Of the eighteen titles on this LP, twelve were recorded once and only once! All come from a richly productive period in the orchestra's history, and most show that, in many ways, there was little wrong with the recording expertise of 1929.

Production: Steve Lane and Trevor Bennell
Source Material: Courtesy John Wadley, John R. Davies, George Ellis. Our thanks also to Bob Hunt and Charlie Crump for their assistance.

SPECIAL NOTES

This compilation includes different takes only where some significant musical variation is involved, such as changes of solo, without an arrangement.
Items which were originally intended for use as alternate masters in performance are not included, unless they are of exceptional interest.
Changes to the age and rarity of the original recordings used in the production of this recording, some extraneous information, is contained in the sleeve notes.
Mastering has been carried out by experienced staff at the mastering house established to oversee the master duplication of the masters, which combined with the best of the original sound. We are confident that any remaining details we will not impact your enjoyment of this important collection.

For free detailed lists of available items, write to
VJM Records, 32 Kenton Lane, Kenton, Harrow, Middx., HA3 8TX, England.

VLP 75

Made in U.K.

DUKE ELLINGTON
JANUARY 1929
10
APRIL 1929

VJM RECORDS
32 KENTON LANE, KENTON,
HARROW, MIDDX., HA3 8TX,
ENGLAND.