



"When people say to me:
'What singer is the greatest?'
or 'Who do you enjoy the most?'
I always say:
**'Well, there's no performance that can
compare with the performance you are
enjoying at the moment.' You know.
And I think this covers pretty well
everything. There's nothing to compare
with what you're enjoying at the
moment—no matter whether it's a
steak, or a drink, or et cetera.'**

Duke Ellington
(speaking to Les Tomkins in 1964)



Duke Ellington

Paul Gonsalves



Johnny Hodges

Sam Woodyard

DUKE ELLINGTON FESTIVAL SESSION

At a time when sustaining as large a band as Ellington's orchestra was beginning to prove difficult, Duke participated in the 1956 Newport Jazz Festival (the third edition of that event). Newport gave jazz a new popular dimension, taking it from a closed nightclub environment to an outdoor stage in broad daylight. Most of the great jazz figures of the day participated at the Newport festival, which proved highly influential for the careers of both Miles Davis in 1955 (who returned to the public eye after performing a version of Thelonious Monk's "Round Midnight") and Duke Ellington the following year. The Ellington performance is best remembered for Paul Gonsalves' multiple choruses on "Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue", which brought the audience's excitement level to its zenith and led to a resurgence in Duke's popularity. He used to say in later years that he had been "born" at Newport '56. From that point on he was a regular attraction at the festival (as well as many other similar festivals that began to appear later). Ellington tended to introduce new pieces at these events, and the album *Festival Session '59* was a studio recording that primarily featured tunes he had presented at the Newport and Playboy jazz festivals during that year. Not all of them were new pieces. "Perdido", originally composed by Ellington's trombonist Juan Tizol, was already an old standard by this time. Apart from the Ellington band (which recorded it for the first time in 1941), it was played by countless jazz groups of all styles, ranging from Dixieland to bebop (many modern jazz standards, like Tadd Dameron's "Wahoo", were, based on the harmony of "Perdido"). Duke's first recording of his son Mercer's composition "Things Ain't What They

Used to Be" also took place in 1941. "Copout" had been recorded in 1957, so Ellington's reworking on the same tune led to the title "Copout Extension". However, every time Duke reworked one of his old tunes (as proven on the marvelous *Masterpieces by Ellington* LP), something new happened. "Duel Fuel", "Idiom '59" and "Launching Pad" were indeed new compositions, and the latter two, along with the extended version of "Copout", were debuted in front of an audience at Newport on July 4, 1959. These long live versions of "Copout Extension" and "Idiom '59" have been added at the end of our CD as bonus tracks. "Launching Pad" was actually composed by Clark Terry and orchestrated by Duke, a fact that Terry himself made clear many years later: "I wrote the whole damn thing. You can tell. I know every note. Duke orchestrated it. I could never understand why he had Ray Nance to play on my tune. Only one solo, and he gives it to Ray. I love what Ray plays here and the way he does it but I wanted this one." Terry had been in the band for almost eight years when he recorded *Festival Session* with Ellington, and he would fondly remember his experiences with Duke: "He missed no opportunity to take advantage of everything that every individual in his group was outstandingly known for. He was a fantastic man. He was a great wit; a beautiful, warm-hearted man. A good person. I can't think of any period, during the ten years I was with the band, that I didn't enjoy – or I wouldn't have stayed there that long. You know, there was a saying that if you stayed in the band ten years, you were doomed – you would never get out. Actually, I think I stayed about nine years and eleven months! But most of the guys stayed right there until the bitter end, and a few left but they returned. I suppose I was one of the few people who did leave and didn't return. But while I was there, I just enjoyed the whole scene. I refer to my close to ten years' stay as having attended the University of Ellingtonia for ten years. It was more or less like that, too; every day was a day of learning for me. As great as Pops was, the individual person who had the most influence on me, and on my playing, was Ellington."

"V.I.P.'s Boogie" and "Jam with Sam" have also been added to the ten tracks of the original LP. Both tracks were recorded during the same September 9, 1958 session that produced *Festival Session* but weren't included on the album. Neither of them were new compositions, however, as they had both been previously recorded by Ellington on May 10, 1951, and were regularly featured by the band in concerts and radio broadcasts.

Tristan Bell (2010)

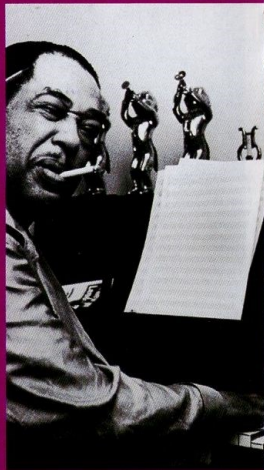
THE DUKE IS COMING!



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HILL AUDITORIUM

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UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY 665-3717



"This man Ellington is the most beautiful person in the world. I don't know anyone who could take the stars he has in his band, assemble them together and write this wonderful music and make it sound the way it does. I could speak for centuries about Ellington. I just love the man. I hope to God that he lives for years and years and never dies. It's something that will happen. We've said to him: 'What are we going to do?' Then we're going to have to live on our memories of him. Other bands may have a musician who will stay for a month, or a year—but you don't find they stay too long. Ellington has men who have been in the band over 30 years. Gosh, and it's beautiful. I know quite a few have been in 15 or 20. I myself have been in and out during the last 20 years. And it's a wonderful thing when you can go and come into an organisation—as long as you go in the right way, that is."

Cat Anderson

ORIGINAL DOWN BEAT REVIEW: Rating: ★★★★★

What a wonderfully powerful yet subtle instrument is the Ellington band. In this release, it kicks its way through part of the 1959 summer's festival material. The moods range from thundering jubilation through pixyish humor and satire to quiet reflection.

The album contains one work that I believe will be of lasting beauty: "Idiom '59". The changing moods of this three-part work display and contrast the clarinets of Procope and Hamilton in Parts I & II. The lovely impressionistic third section opens darkly but climaxes with the band strutting behind Terry's humorous fluegelhorn. This compositional strenght and diversity is what makes Ellington superior to the "I Got Rhythm" and blues bands.

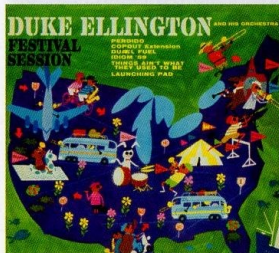
While more in the way of a novelty, the other long work, "Duael Fuel", has more to offer than just a duel between the two drummers. The brass figures in the beginning and the swinging second section give the piece musical substance. The drum battle is interesting too. Woodyard builds an expressive solo: simple beginning, complex middle, humorous close. Johnson has a good bit but doesn't come up to his cohort's level. This work also points up how shuffle rhythm and heavy afterbeats -two things that usually spell rock and roll -can be used tactfully and tastefully.

The other outstanding track is "Copout Extension", a marathon for tenorman Gonsalves. Methinks the "Extension" was too far extended; after more than 20 choruses poor Paul has run out of ideas. He does, however, get some good licks during his eight minutes before the mike.

I couldn't close this review without a word about Harry Carney. This man is not only the anchor man of the sax section but, at times, as in "Perdido" and "Idiom '59", drives the section like a task-master. Indeed, it seems he swings the whole band from his chair in the front row.

By all means, listen to this.

ORIGINAL LINER NOTES:



During the past five years a summer season has developed in the jazz world. Following the lead of the theatre, and substituting Bermuda shorts for straw hats, jazz has fashioned a circuit which now includes parks, tents, and stadiums where fans watch jazz through binoculars and sit placidly in the rain if necessary.

The circuit now extends from Newport, which is the season's official opener, through Boston, New York, Toronto, French Lick, Chicago, and smaller points along the way to the closing in Monterey, California. Jazzmen, who once played only at night to a baby spotlight, now blow in sunshine. And instead of after-hours jamming and all-day sleeping, the festival season provides and lectures on "origins".

Duke Ellington strides into the summer jazz season with the appreciation of a man who loves warm weather, and the various festivals always spur him to new composition. And the summer of 1959 has been his most active summer season so far. He began it with a two-day jazz festival at Tamiment, a resort in Pennsylvania, where, in June, he and his merry band assembled for two concerts, a series of lectures on the origins of Ellington, and numerous foursomes on the golf course. It was here that Duke introduced his first festival composition of the season, "Idiom '59".

Following his debut in the Poconos, Duke arrived in Newport, Rhode Island, aware as usual that Newport is a magic word for Ellington and determined to recreate the magic again. Duke reintroduced "Idiom '59" at Newport and also introduced an extended version of "Copout",

a piece he recorded originally in 1957 and released as a single Columbia record, for his marathon soloist Paul Gonsalves. The magic did happen again in that wonderful two-hour session which closed with Jimmy Rushing and Duke in their swinging performances recorded early in the year in *Ellington Jazz Party*.

During the rest of the festival season Duke jumped in tent theatres in Wallingford, Connecticut, and Lambertville, New Jersey, broke it up in Boston and at Randall's Island, New York, and played a wild matinee at the Playboy Jazz Festival in Chicago. "Launching Pad" and "Duel Fuel" emerged at the final festival sessions, and of course "Perdido" and "Things Ain't What They Used to Be" were used everywhere as festival standards guaranteed to spread the word that Duke was on from parking lot to press tent.

Ellington's contribution to the festivals of '59 make up a great program of new music. But because no one festival included all that was new, Duke decided to wait for recording until the end of the summer. Then, in New York, two days before sailing for Europe, the band, still bolstered by extra brass and two drummers, recorded the highlights of the summer. And, if it doesn't completely destroy your idea of Ellington, I'll confess that all of this music was played and recorded from 8:00 A.M. to Noon. The summer had a remarkable effect on jazz players.

And now the program, so that you'll know who's on what with whom:

"Perdido", Tizol's classic, comes on like an Ellington signature with Carney's baritone melody leading the way and Ray Nance's trumpet solo in the first chorus. Clark Terry has the solo the rest of the way with the band building through five choruses from Carney and the reeds to Duke and the drummers to the trombones and finally to an all-out last chorus.

"Copout Extension" keeps up the mood. The original piece ended with the brass triplets, and the new "extension" takes off from there with chorus after chorus by Paul Gonsalves, one of the men in jazz who were invented by the long-playing record.

"Duel Fuel", introduced in the Playboy Festival, diphthong and all, stars Sam Woodyard and Jimmy Johnson on drums, perhaps the first drum festival in stereophonic sound. The piece is divided into three parts, opening with alternating drums and leading into the octave riffs played

by six trumpets, three trombones, and two tenor saxes. After leaping through a brief waltz figure and a briefer samba, "Fuel" settles into the second part which features piano and the shuffle beat of both drummers. The final section is the anticipated drum battle, opening with Woodyard, who builds it to the final figure, known as Sam's Elbow, played with one stick and one elbow. Jimmy Johnson takes over then and adds his own innovation at the end by sliding two drumsticks through his fist on the snare. The drummers then alternate to the finale. Applause is by the band, announcements by the piano player.

"Idiom '59" begins with Russell Procope's wonderful New Orleans clarinet solo while Shorty Baker and Ray Nance play a distant background. The second section rocks with saxes and trombones and a brilliant Jimmy Hamilton clarinet solo. The third section opens with Duke and a bolero-like beat that becomes a darkly colourful orchestration. The final coda returns again to the rocking rhythm, Duke's piano, and Clark Terry on flugelhorn. The last bars are conducted and shouted by Ellington, who gets more exercise out of such endings than anyone else in the band.

"Things Ain't What They Used to Be" is played, as it was all summer, to remind us of the standards Duke never abandons. This, of course, features Johnny Hodges all the way.

"Launching Pad", the final new piece of the season, used a quartet of spacemen consisting of Clark Terry, Britt Woodman, Jimmy Hamilton on clarinet, and Paul Gonsalves. The quartet solos most of the way with Ray Nance also featured, and it is a final reminder that Mr. Ellington spent a creative summer at his favourite pastime, writing new music for his band.

"Festival Session" is the recorded tour of the summer jazz circuit by the hottest of the jazz attractions, covering two thousand miles and a half-dozen nights and afternoons of jazz. All you need to complete the scene are blankets, raincoats, and a hard chair.

Irving Townsend

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1. **PERDIDO** / (Juan Tizol-Duke Ellington-H. J. Lengersfelder-Ervin Drake) 4:36
 2. **COPOUT EXTENSION** / (Duke Ellington) 8:19
 3. **DUEL FUEL -Part I** / (Duke Ellington-Clark Terry) 2:45
 4. **DUEL FUEL -Part II** / (Duke Ellington-Clark Terry) 1:43
 5. **DUEL FUEL -Part III** / (Duke Ellington-Clark Terry) 6:17
 6. **IDIOM '59 -Part I [Vapor]** / (Duke Ellington) 2:02
 7. **IDIOM '59 -Part II** / (Duke Ellington) 4:36
 8. **IDIOM '59 -Part III** / (Duke Ellington) 7:06
 9. **THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE** / (Mercer Ellington-Ted Parsons) 3:00
 10. **LAUNCHING PAD** / (Duke Ellington) 7:37
 11. **V.I.P.'S BOOGIE** / (Duke Ellington) 2:57
 12. **JAM WITH SAM** / (Duke Ellington) 3:17
 13. **IDIOM '59 [Live version]** / (Duke Ellington) [Live version] 14:26*
 14. **COPOUT EXTENSION** (Duke Ellington) [Live version] 10:05*
- TOTAL TIME: 78:53**
-

DUKE ELLINGTON & His Orchestra

Cat Anderson, Harold "Shorty" Baker, Fats Ford, Willie Cook, Clark Terry (tp), Ray Nance (tp, vln, vcl), Quentin Jackson (tb, bass on 3-5 only), Britt Woodman, John Sanders (tb), Jimmy Hamilton (cl, ts), Russell Procope (cl, as), Johnny Hodges (as), Paul Gonzalves (ts), Harry Carney (bar, cl, b-cl), Duke Ellington (p), Joe Benjamin (b on 6 only), Jimmy Woode (b on 1-2 & 7-12), Sam Woodyard, Jimmy Johnson (d).

New York, September 8, 1959.

Note: Jimmy Woode arrived late to the session and Quentin Jackson played bass instead of trombone on 3-5, the first tunes of the date. Joe Benjamin was called as a replacement and played bass on 6. Then Woode showed up and played on the rest of the tunes.

***BONUS TRACKS (13-14):**

Same personnel (Jimmy Woode on bass). Live at the Newport Jazz Festival, Newport, Rhode Island, July 4, 1959.



★★★★★



DUKE ELLINGTON

FESTIVAL SESSION

This release presents the complete original 1959 classic album *Festival Session*, on which Duke Ellington introduces new long compositions for his orchestra that he had been preparing during the previous months. This is evidenced by the two extended live versions of "Copout Extension" and "Idiom '59". Two of the album's best pieces, they were recorded at Newport two months before the studio session and are presented here as bonus tracks.

★★★★★ **DOWN BEAT** original review: **FESTIVAL SESSION**

"What a wonderfully powerful yet subtle instrument is the Ellington band. In this release, it kicks its way through part of the 1959 summer's festival material. The moods range from thundering jubilation through pixyish humor and satire to quiet reflection. By all means, listen to this." (Don De Michael)

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See 12-page booklet for complete information.

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