



DUKE ELLINGTON

& HIS ORCHESTRA, 1965-1972

NI 2736

1. The Old Circus Train (c) (Duke Ellington/Tempo)	7:28	9. Maiera (f) (Fred Stone)	4:31
2. Swamp Goo (d) (Duke Ellington/Tempo)	4:38	10. Thanks for the Beautiful Land (f) (Duke Ellington/Tempo)	3:28
3. Trombone Buster (a) (Cat Anderson/Tempo)	3:15	11. Charpoy (i) (Billy Strayhorn/Tempo)	3:32
4. Bourbon Street Jangling Jollies (f) (Duke Ellington/Tempo)	3:53	12. Portrait of Louis Armstrong (f) (Duke Ellington/Tempo)	2:54
5. Mellow Ditty (c) (Duke Ellington/Tempo)	3:18	13. Girdle Hurdle (d) (Duke Ellington/Tempo)	2:24
6. To Know You Is to Love You (e) (Duke Ellington and Don George/Tempo)	4:28	14. Sans Snyphelle (g) (Wild Bill Davis/Strethen Music)	6:15
7. Naidni Remmus (h) (Wild Bill Davis/Strethen Music)	4:57	15. Woods (j) (Duke Ellington/Tempo)	8:06
8. The Prowling Cat (b) (Cat Anderson/Tempo)	2:48		

Playing Time 66:23

(a) Recorded in Chicago, March 31, 1965. Duke Ellington, Piano; Cat Anderson, Cootie Williams, Ray Nance, Herbie Jones, Trumpets; Lawrence Brown, Buster Cooper, Chuck Connors, Trombones; Johnny Hodges, Russell Procope, Paul Gonsalves, Jimmy Hamilton, Harry Carney, Reeds; John Lamb, Bass; Sam Woodyard, Drums

(b) Recorded in San Francisco, September 23, 1965. Duke Ellington, Piano; Cat Anderson, Mercer Ellington, Nat Adderley, Alien Smith, Trumpets; Lawrence Brown, Buster Cooper, Chuck Connors, Trombones; Johnny Hodges, Russell Procope, Paul Gonsalves, Jimmy Hamilton, Harry Carney, Reeds; John Lamb, Bass; Louie Bellson, Drums

(c) Recorded in New York, August 18, 1966. Duke Ellington, Piano; Cat Anderson, Cootie Williams, Mercer Ellington, Herbie Jones, Trumpets; Lawrence Brown, Buster Cooper, Chuck Connors, Trombones; Johnny Hodges, Russell Procope, Paul Gonsalves, Jimmy Hamilton, Harry Carney, Reeds; Jimmy Jones, Piano; John Lamb, Bass; Sam Woodyard, Drums

(d) Recorded in Los Angeles, June 23, 1967. Duke Ellington, Jimmy Jones, Pianos; Cat Anderson, Cootie Williams, Mercer Ellington, Herbie Jones, Trumpets; Lawrence Brown, Buster Cooper, Chuck Connors, Trombones; Johnny Hodges, Russell Procope, Paul Gonsalves, Jimmy Hamilton, Harry Carney, Reeds; John Lamb, Bass; Chris Columbus, Drums

(e) Recorded in New York, September 10, 1969. Duke Ellington, Piano; Tony Watkins, Vocal

(f) Recorded in Milan, July 23, 1970. Duke Ellington, Piano; Wild Bill Davis, Organ; Cat Anderson, Mercer Ellington, Cootie Williams, Fred Stone, Nelson Williams, Trumpets; Booty Wood, Malcolm Taylor, Chuck Connors, Trombones; Russell Procope, Norris Turney, Paul Gonsalves, Harold Ashby, Harry Carney, Reeds; Joe Benjamin, Bass; Rufus Jones, Drums

(g) Recorded in New York, December 9, 1970. Wild Bill Davis, Organ; Cat Anderson, Cootie Williams, Money Johnson, Al Rubin, Trumpets; Booty Wood, Malcolm Taylor, Chuck Connors, Trombones; Russell Procope, Norris Turney, Paul Gonsalves, Harold Ashby, Harry Carney, Reeds; Joe Benjamin, Bass; Rufus Jones, Drums

(h) Recorded in New York, December 11, 1970. Duke Ellington, Piano; Wild Bill Davis, Organ; Cat Anderson, Cootie Williams, Money Johnson, Al Rubin, Trumpets; Booty Wood, Malcolm Taylor, Chuck Connors, Trombones; Russell Procope, Norris Turney, Paul Gonsalves, Harold Ashby, Harry Carney, Reeds; Joe Benjamin, Bass; Rufus Jones, Drums

(i) Recorded in New York, May 13, 1971. Duke Ellington, Piano; Wild Bill Davis, Organ; Money Johnson, Richard Williams, Eddie Preston, Mercer Ellington, Trumpets; Booty Wood, Malcolm Taylor, Chuck Connors, Trombones; Buddy Pearson, Norris Turney, Paul Gonsalves, Harold Ashby, Harry Carney, Reeds; Joe Benjamin, Bass; Rufus Jones, Drums

(j) Recorded in New York, August 2, 1972. Duke Ellington, Piano; Money Johnson, Trumpet; Russell Procope, Harold Minerve, Norris Turney, Harold Ashby, Paul Gonsalves, Harry Carney, Reeds; Joe Benjamin, Bass; Rufus Jones, Drums

Here are 15 previously unissued recordings from the treasure chest that Duke Ellington liked to refer to as the 'stockpile.' Although he professed little concern for posterity and always placed emphasis on 'now,' he took care of both in incomparable fashion. How wonderful it would be if the work of the greatest musicians of the past had been similarly documented on records! For Ellington has left us not merely finished, definitive versions of his music, but also the experimental, workshop models on which the ideas for masterpieces were explored and developed. In effect, what we have is like a huge sketchbook, where prototypes, alternatives, and variations are shown with fascinating differences of detail, all of which are very well-illustrated in this collection.

The Old Circus Train, for example, is a studio version of a train number first released in a live performance featuring Johnny Hodges. It is a descendant from *Night Train*, which, in turn, was an obvious descendant from Ellington's *Happy-Go-Lucky Local*. The last, originally a vehicle for several soloists, received probably its finest performance as a showcase for a long improvisation by Paul Gonsalves, the band's great tenor star. Jimmy Hamilton was for many years the other tenor player in the reed section, but he was primarily featured on clarinet, of which he was a formidable virtuoso. Because he was always overshadowed by Gonsalves, his ability on tenor has long been undervalued. This performance of *The Old Circus Train* should help enhance his reputation as a first-class player of both instruments.

He solos impressively here, Ellington having decided to give him his head over a lengthy distance, as he had previously done on *Hy'a Sue*. This was another opportunity for him to challenge Gonsalves, who had been featured on many a long "wailing interval" since his 1956 Newport triumph. Some critics like to dismiss such marathon interpretations, but stamina and imagination are required to maintain continuity and listener interest while steadily building excitement over a blues foundation. Hamilton's admitted main influence was Ben Webster, and it is evident enough in a sequence of ten choruses, seven of them with just the rhythm section and three riding over the band's ensemble. Sam Woodyard's infectious shuffle beat and the blues character of the piece call for an earthy, raunchy interpretation, and Hamilton provides it, convincingly, in a way that contrasts remarkably with the precise brilliance of his clarinet work. Note that, to allow the leader to conduct, Jimmy Jones takes over on the keyboard just before the tenor solo begins.

Swamp Goo was part of a new program Duke Ellington put together for a European tour at the beginning of 1967. After his introductory piano chorus, the three clarinets of Hamilton, Russell Procope, and Harry Carney wail in a time-honored manner. How easily Ellington reconstructed, and even updated, the languishing sounds of a swampy jungle! After another piano chorus, Procope is out front for four choruses, blowing in a New Orleans fashion akin to that of his illustrious predecessor, Barney Bigard. He had surprised everyone with his adaptability in recreating this style after Bigard's departure from the band, the more so since it contrasted sharply with his more 'contemporary' phraseology in the 30s. Yet it should be remembered that, as a very young man, he had recorded with Jelly Roll Morton!

Trombone Buster was written by Cat Anderson to feature Buster Cooper. The title seemed to vary as often as it was played, but this one is as accurately descriptive as any. Cooper is an example of how Ellington loved individual voices. He played—and plays—trombone with great good humor and vitality. In many respects, he continued a tradition, too, for audiences have always delighted in seeing trombones sliding in furiously manipulated action. And Cooper is always firmly in control on such exhibition pieces.

Bourbon Street Jingling Jollies is one of four numbers included here that were recorded in Milan during another visit to Europe. No matter how bruising the conditions of such tours, to Ellington a day off was an opportunity to record, and perhaps, in his wisdom, he saw the session as a means to keeping the less responsible members of his flock out of mischief; or again, it may have served as a rehearsal at which performance levels were improved upon. In any event, the sad and somewhat sombre salute to Bourbon Street was part of *The New Orleans Suite* Ellington had written earlier in the year, and it was unusual in showcasing Norris Turney's expertise on flute, an instrument Ellington had resisted when it became fashionable, despite the fact that Jimmy Hamilton had made himself proficient on it. The clarinet was much superior, in Ellington's opinion, and he stubbornly retained it as it tended to disappear from other bands.

Mellow Ditty is well named and rocks easily at a comfortable medium tempo with mellow interludes by Ellington and Cootie Williams. It should be noted that this blues is not to be confused with *Melloditty*, as premiered in *A Tonal Group* at Carnegie Hall in 1946.

To Know You Is to Love You is sung by Tony Watkins and is included here because of Ellington's splendid piano accompaniment. Eight takes were made of this and the accompaniment was close to perfection in each case.

Naidni Remmus, *Sans Snyphelle*, and *Charpoy* all display the prowess of Wild Bill Davis and are evidence that Ellington was far from resting on his laurels in 1970. Davis plays full, 'orchestral' organ, not in the hornlike manner of Jimmy Smith, and the idea of melding his big sound with that of the Ellington band was daring in itself. An arranger-composer of much talent himself, Davis was responsible for the first two titles. The basic identity of *Naidni Remmus* is partially revealed if read backwards (Gonsalves and Turney are featured besides the organist), but the boldly declarative *Sans Snyphelle* (with solos by Ashby and Williams) possibly remembers a cold incurred in France during the summer? *Charpoy* was written after the band's tour of the Middle East and India by Billy Strayhorn, whose death in 1967 was such a severe loss to Ellington, and whose place Davis now partly filled. The use of organ in front of rich orchestral backgrounds is both novel and provocative, to say the least. Perhaps because *charpoy* is Anglo-Indian for *bed*, the tempo is restful.

The Prowling Cat is a typical demonstration of Cat Andersen's high-flying bravura. His phenomenal range never failed to excite concert audiences.

Maiera features the Flügelhorn of Fred Stone, a Canadian who had impressed Ellington in Toronto. The imaginative arrangement summons up a weirdly exotic jungle scene. Some far-out activity on the part of the denizens is hinted at in Norris Turney's alto choruses.

Thanks for the Beautiful Land and *Portrait of Louis Armstrong* are further movements from *The New Orleans Suite*. On the former, Harold Ashby, a great friend and admirer of Ben Webster, blows tenor in an intricate arrangement. His surprising leaps and strongly attacked notes give it an altogether personal flavor. Cootie Williams was unfortunately undermined on *Portrait of Louis Armstrong*, but though the recording tends to put the background in the foreground, it does have the purpose of drawing attention to the kind of writing with which Ellington supported his stars.

Girdle Hurdle is an up-tempo vehicle for Hamilton's clarinet, and of a kind on which his superior technique could be profitably displayed. It is a long way from the vernacular of *Swamp Goo*.

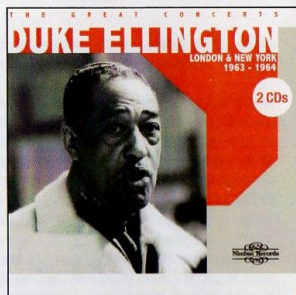
Woods was written as a background to one of Duke Ellington's most popular songs, but he liked it so much that he often presented it as an instrumental in 1973. Played here by the six-piece reed section, it moves with a subtle grace and has the composer's piano solos in those parts which would later be given over to the tenors of Paul Gonsalves and Harold Ashby. It was made during what Ellington termed a 'theatrical' period in jazz, and it demonstrated that there was a place for understatement as well as for flamboyance.

Stanley Dance
author of *The World of Duke Ellington* (Da Capo Press, Inc.)

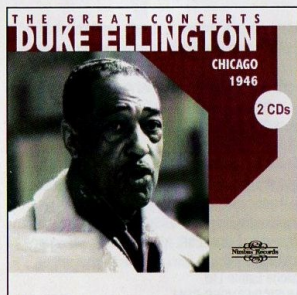
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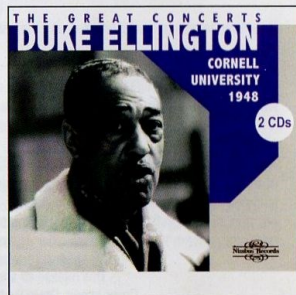
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Nimbus

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Featuring
Nat Adderley
Louie Bellson
Mercer Ellington
Johnny Hodges
Cootie Williams

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