

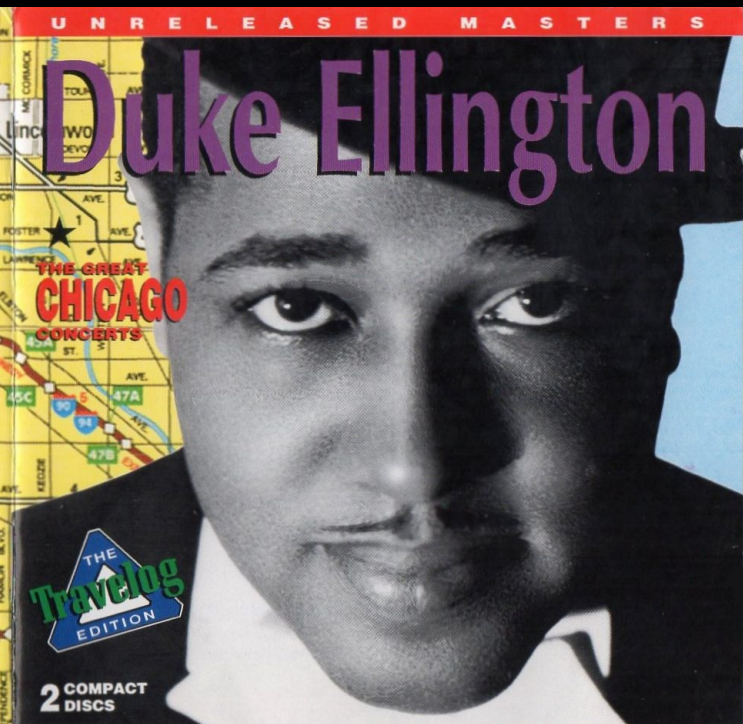
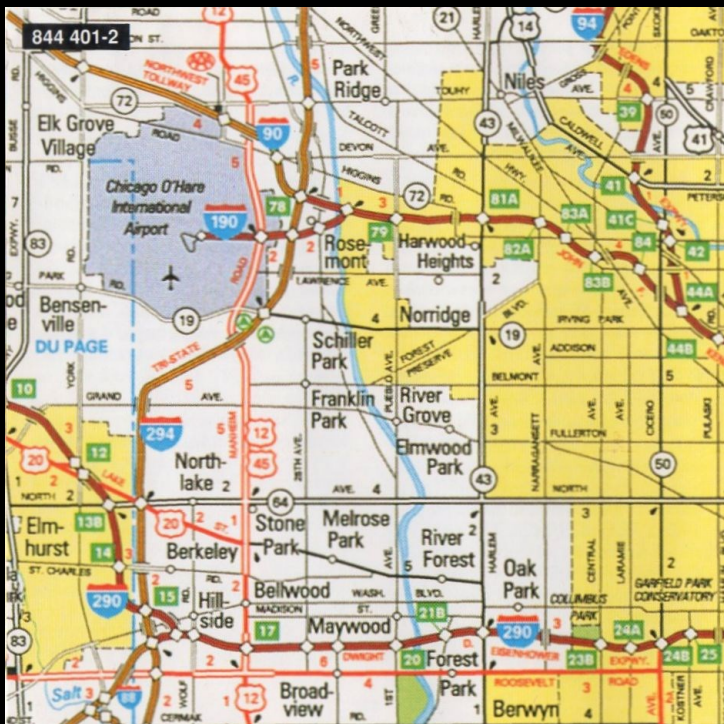
UNRELEASED MASTERS

Duke Ellington

THE GREAT
CHICAGO
CONCERTS

THE
Travelog
EDITION

2 COMPACT
DISCS



Duke Ellington

THE GREAT CHICAGO CONCERTS
THE CIVIC OPERA HOUSE, 1946



COMPACT DISC NO. 1

- 1 Ring Dem Bells (2:24)
(Duke Ellington & Irving Mills) Famous Music & Warner Bros. Music
 - 2 Jumpin' Punks (3:35)
(Mercer Ellington) Tempo Music
 - 3 Beale Street Blues (3:24)
(W.C. Handy) W.C. Handy Music
 - 4 Memphis Blues (2:26)
(George A. Norton & W.C. Handy) W.C. Handy Music
 - 5 The Golden Feather (3:38)
(Duke Ellington) Tempo Music
 - 6 The Air-Conditioned Jungle (4:44)
(Duke Ellington & J. Hamilton) Tempo Music
 - 7 A Very Unbooted Character (3:49)
(Duke Ellington) Tempo Music
 - 8 Sultry Sunset (3:58)
(Duke Ellington) Tempo Music
- The Deep South Suite:
- 9 *Magnolias Just Dripping With Molasses* (4:43)
 - 10 *Hearsay* (4:57)
 - 11 *There Was Nobody Looking* (3:07)
 - 12 *Happy-Go-Lucky Local* (5:47)
(Duke Ellington & Billy Strayhorn) Tempo Music

- 13 *Things Ain't What They Used To Be* (4:39)
(Mercer Ellington) Tempo Music
- 14 *Hiawatha* (3:47)
(Duke Ellington & Al Sears) Tempo Music
- 15 *Ride, Red, Ride** (2:16)
(Lucky Millinder & Irving Mills) Mills Music
- 16 *A Blues Riff** (3:48)
(Duke Ellington) Tempo Music
- 17 *Improvisation, #2** (2:48)
(Duke Ellington) Tempo Music
- 18 *Honeysuckle Rose** (3:37)
(Andy Razaf & Thomas "Fats" Waller) Chappell Music & Randy Razaf Music
- 19 *Blue Skies (Trumpet No End)* (2:24)
(Irving Berlin) Irving Berlin Music

DUKE ELLINGTON *piano* ■ DJANGO REINHARDT, *guitar**

Shelton Hemphill, Taft Jordan, Cat Anderson,
Harold Baker & Ray Nance, *trumpets*
Lawrence Brown, Claude Jones, Wilbur De Paris, *trombones*
Russell Procope, *alto sax & clarinet* ■ Johnny Hodges, *alto sax*
Jimmy Hamilton, *tenor sax & clarinet* ■ Al Sears, *tenor sax*
Harry Carney, *baritone sax & clarinet*
Fred Guy, *guitar* ■ Oscar Pettiford, *bass* ■ Sonny Greer, *drums*

Recorded November 10, 1946 in Chicago.

Cover Photo:
Duke Ellington, 1934

COMPACT DISC NO. 2

- 1 Star Spangled Banner (1:07)
(arr. Mercer Ellington) Duke Ellington Music
- 2 In A Mellotone (2:40)
(Duke Ellington & Milt Gabler) EMI Robbins Music
- 3 Solid Old Man (3:04)
(Duke Ellington) EMI Mills Music
- 4 Come Sunday, Work Song
(excerpts from Black, Brown & Beige) (11:46)
(Duke Ellington) G. Schirmer
- 5 Rugged Romeo (2:52)
(Duke Ellington) Tempo Music/Duke Ellington Music
- 6 Circe (4:41)
(Duke Ellington) Duke Ellington Music/Tempo Music
- 7 Dancers in Love (2:25)
(Duke Ellington) Tempo Music/Duke Ellington Music
- 8 Coloratura (2:53)
(Duke Ellington) Duke Ellington Music/Tempo Music
- 9 Frankie & Johnny (6:30)
(Duke Ellington/arr. Mercer Ellington) Tempo Music/Duke Ellington Music
- 10 Caravan (3:30)
(Duke Ellington, Juan Tizol, Irving Mills) EMI Mills Music
- 11 Take the A Train (2:42)
(Billy Strayhorn) Tempo Music
- 12 Mellow Ditty (6:55)
(Duke Ellington) Tempo Music/Duke Ellington Music

- 13 Fugue (2:33)
(Duke Ellington) Tempo Music/Duke Ellington Music
- 14 Jam a Ditty (3:38)
(Duke Ellington) Tempo Music/Duke Ellington Music
- 15 Magenta Haze (4:48)
(Duke Ellington) Tempo Music/Duke Ellington Music
- 16 Pitter Panther Patter (3:17)
(Duke Ellington) EMI Robbins Music
- 17 Suburbanite (3:31)
(Duke Ellington) Tempo Music/Duke Ellington Music

DUKE ELLINGTON *piano*

Shelton Hemphill, Taft Jordan, Cat Anderson,
Francis Williams, Bernard Flood, *trumpets*

Lawrence Brown, Claude Jones, Wilbur De Paris, *trombones*

Otto Hardwick, Johnny Hodges, Jimmy Hamilton,
Al Sears, Harry Carney, *reeds*

Fred Guy, *guitar* ■ Oscar Pettiford, *bass* ■ Sonny Greer, *drums*

Recorded January 20, 1946 in Chicago.

NOTES FOR CD NO. 1

Duke Ellington's famous concert in aid of Russian War Relief at Carnegie Hall in 1943, when his *Black, Brown and Beige* was premiered, set more than one kind of precedent. By 1946 it had become customary for him to present new works in a concert or concerts on an annual basis. His program at Carnegie Hall on 4 January that year belatedly delivered 1945's entitlement, but in November he was ready again with much more fresh material for a concert tour arranged by the William Morris Agency. What made it unique was the addition of a "guest star" from Europe—the guitarist Django Reinhardt.

Ellington had met Django in Paris in 1939 and had been much impressed when they played together in a small club. Moreover, three of his musicians had recorded with the guitarist, and like so many famous American jazzmen in France before World War II, they had been dazzled and delighted by the experience. In his autobiographical *Music Is My Mistress*,

Ellington wrote of Django as "a very dear friend... one whom I regard as among the few great inimitables of our music." (The other inimitables were Johnny Hodges, Sidney Bechet, Billy Strayhorn and Art Tatum, and while attempts were certainly made at imitating them, the attempts were never completely successful.)

Unlike his erstwhile partner Stephane Grappelli, who had been in England, Django had spent the war years in occupied Europe. The intervening period had perhaps diminished his reputation, but he set out for the U.S. with high hopes, not even taking his guitar with him because he anticipated that American manufacturers would rush to equip him with their latest models. Ellington had written no special music for him, and when asked if he had brought any of his own, Django replied confidently, "*Jouez ce que vous voulez, je suivrai!*" ("Play what you wish, I'll follow!") So it was decided that he should play the four numbers on this disc, the band having a minimal supportive role and the guitarist maximum freedom.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

The opening selection brings back an Ellington success of 1930, written when the band was in Hollywood to appear in its first movie, *Check and Double Check*. Although **Ring Dem Bells** was not used in the film, it subsequently became something of a jazz standard. As so often when Ellington's early hits were revived—or frequently repeated—the tempo went up, not always advantageously, and this version is much faster than the original. Yet it makes a good, flag waving opener and introduces several of the band's notable soloists in a lively sequence: Sonny Greer (responsible for the tubular bells), Jimmy Hamilton, Johnny Hodges, Harry Carney, Wilbur De Paris, Hodges again (answered by Ray Nance's scatting), Nance on trumpet for two choruses, followed by an uproarious ensemble finale.

Jumpin' Punkins was written by Mercer Ellington in 1941. The title derived from Ben Webster's jocular reference to his having known Mercer

since he was a kid. Duke Ellington and Harry Carney are the chief soloists, but it was also designed to feature Sonny Greer more than usual. Live recording has both advantages and disadvantages, but among the former are the differences of perspective it often affords in comparison with those normally obtained in the record studio. In this case, and on the preceding number, the rhythm section's members have an uncommon and rewarding prominence.

Beale Street Blues and Memphis Blues form part of a tribute to W. C. Handy that Ellington had begun recording a few months before. Soloists in the first are Jimmy Hamilton, Shorty Baker, Lawrence Brown and Ray Nance; in the second they are Cat Anderson and Jimmy Hamilton.

The Golden Feather was one of two recent pieces whose titles acknowledged associates in the Ellington enterprise at that time. Critic and disc jockey Leonard Feather, who annotated most of Ellington's concert programs during the 1940s, modestly wrote of this new work only that it

featured Harry Carney's baritone saxophone, that Carney was born in Boston in 1910 and had been with Ellington since 1927. Carney's big sound enhances a rich arrangement of considerable dramatic intensity.

The Air-Conditioned Jungle features Jimmy Hamilton's clarinet. The arrangement, on which he and Ellington collaborated, showcased his brilliant virtuosity and gave notice that the band now had a real star on clarinet for the first time since the much-missed Barney Bigard left. Stylistically, however, Hamilton reflected Benny Goodman's sound and innovations, and the title slyly recognizes the difference between his "jungle" and those in which Bigard's New Orleans idiom had been heard to special advantage. Oscar Pettiford, a formidable bassist, has an important role here, too.

A Very Unbooted Character had previously been known without the adverb. The reason for the added emphasis is not known, but to be "very unbooted" must have made a square of any unhip character.

Ellington always insisted on the importance of humor in jazz, and this is most evident in the performance's surprise ending. Before it, Lawrence Brown and Jimmy Hamilton each take a chorus, after which Ray Nance and Shorty Baker (two very hip trumpet players) have an inventive, two-chorus dialogue in four-bar phrases.

Sultry Sunset brings on the peerless Johnny Hodges in a serene treatment of a new and well-titled Ellington composition. The backgrounds are of the kind he liked and that could nowhere else be matched. This is the first recorded performance of a number that was soon to disappear inexplicably from the band's programs.

The four-part **Deep South Suite**, as Ellington pointed out in *Music Is My Mistress*, was the "major" work then expected at every Carnegie Hall concert. In 1946 its ironic messages were daringly ahead of their time. The first movement, for example, **Magnolias Just Dripping With Molasses**, was intended, he wrote,

"to reproduce what might be called the Dixie Chamber of Commerce dream picture, with beautiful blue skies, Creole gals with flashing eyes, fried chicken, watermelons, and all those good old nostalgic memories." He went on to describe the mood as "Dixie flavor in a pastel (whispering) jump," one that was "maintained till the last chorus, which we took out fortissimo." The soloists briefly heard in this fast-moving panorama are the pianist, Nance, Brown and Hamilton.

Hearsay, dark and somber, is concerned with "things that were not at all in accordance with the Chamber of Commerce dream picture." With such things, say, as a lynching! Shorty Baker's stark, accusing trumpet statements are unblinking remembrances of tragic happenings.

There Was Nobody Looking, in contrast, is light, playful, and the prime responsibility of the piano player. "When nobody is looking," he explained, "many people of different extractions are able to get along well together." His intent here was masked by a parable about the effect

of a breeze on an affair between a puppy and a flower. Afterwards, to those who had wanted "out-and-out protest", he said, "I felt it was good theatre to say it without saying it."

Happy-Go-Lucky Local, last movement of the **Deep South Suite**, proved to be the most successful of Ellington's several train pieces, although it hadn't the pace or glamour of the earlier **Daylight Express**. This one portrayed a little local with an upright engine and a "Negro fireman" who delighted in blowing the whistle to greet those who watched from their windows on *his* side of the track as the train passed. Besides the striking rhythmic contributions of Ellington and Pettiford, there is solo commentary en route from Procope, Nance, Hamilton and Anderson. Incidentally, the source of a bigger popular hit, **Night Train**, is very evident here.

Things Ain't What They Used To Be was one of Hodge's most successful vehicles and always a timely reminder that he was a consummate master of blues as well

as ballads. Shorty Baker and Lawrence Brown also get a couple of choruses each on this hardy perennial in the band's book.

Hiawatha, dominated by crisp brass playing and Greer's forceful drumming, features the somewhat under-recorded tenor saxophone of Al Sears. His cheerful, bouncing style always had strong appeal for a section of the audience.

Then it is Django Reinhardt's turn... for five choruses on **Ride, Red, Ride** (a **Tiger Rag** derivative), for ten on the blues, for an appealing, unaccompanied **Improvisation No. 2**, and finally for four choruses on **Honeysuckle Rose**. One can imagine with what surprise those familiar only with Django's recordings heard him for the first time live, and playing *amplified* guitar. Although he may not have been too familiar with his new equipment, he sounds as confident and imaginative as ever in an unaccustomed musical context, in a strange hall, in a foreign country. Ellington brings the band in for storming finales, and Django flies

triumphantly and happily with his new colleagues. There is enough of the applause recorded to show that the jazz-experienced Chicago audience thoroughly approved.

To end this memorable concert literally on a high note, and with climax on climax, there is Mary Lou William's thrilling arrangement of **Blue Skies**, later given the title **Trumpet No End**. The trumpet soloists are Taft Jordan (first chorus), Shorty Baker (second chorus, Nance on bridge), Francis Williams (third chorus), Cat Anderson (fourth chorus, Nance on bridge), and Anderson again (coda).

ENGINEERING NOTE:

John Steiner recorded this concert at the Civic Opera House in Chicago using overhead microphones. Working nearly a half-century later from the original acetate discs, Larry Appelbaum of the Library of Congress Recording Laboratory has remastered these recordings to give us the most agreeable sound possible. The concert was recorded originally on six 16" double-sided acetate discs.

NOTES FOR CD NO. 2

Like much of what was euphemistically termed the civilized world, the world of the big bands was a shambles in January 1946. World War II had made it very, very difficult to tour groups of fifteen to twenty musicians economically around the country, and now the taste of the public itself seemed to be changing.

Duke Ellington, as he so often did, apparently anticipated the changed conditions, or, as he sometimes liked to claim, he may just have happened to be in the right place at the right time with the right kind of music.

Three years before, he had premiered a major work at Carnegie Hall in New York, **Black, Brown & Beige**. Although the critics of the day had not gone into ecstasies over it, the controversy that ensued effectively launched jazz in a new direction, into the concert hall. It had, of course, been played in Carnegie Hall before, but now jazz concerts were to become commonplace. They were played by all kinds of groups,

and with special success by Norman Granz's Jazz at the Philharmonic troupe, which specialized in recreating the atmosphere of the jam session on stage. But no jazz orchestra was so well equipped to present a long, varied concert program as Ellington's did. Although a glance at the personnel will show grievous losses since the decade's auspicious opening year, it was still a formidable ensemble. Yes, heroes like Cootie Williams, Rex Stewart, Ray Nance, Joe Nanton, Juan Tizol, Barney Bigard, Ben Webster and Jimmy Blanton were all gone, but such key men as Johnny Hodges, Otto Hardwick, Harry Carney, Lawrence Brown and Sonny Greer were still in position, and strong replacements included Cat Anderson, Taft Jordan, Jimmy Hamilton and Oscar Pettiford. What finally made the orchestra so outstanding was its charismatic, piano-playing leader, who was also the composer-arranger of most of its unique music.

Before proceeding to the program played at the Civic Opera House in Chicago, it may be well to discuss

briefly the general effect of the concert hall. Previously, jazz had mostly been played in dance halls, ballrooms, clubs, movie and vaudeville theaters. Until the end of the 1930s, too, it had mostly been played for dancers, professional and amateur. This last fact accounted for the serious consideration accorded tempos appropriate to the music, and to performance played with energy and pulse that dancers found compelling. **It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing** had been at once the title of an Ellington composition, a truism, and an essential part of the jazz credo. Now, with seated audiences, indolent if not comatose, it became necessary to address the head more directly than the feet! And for the increasingly dominant white element in the audiences, it was also necessary to cater with more pretentious titles. As long before as 1931, when Ellington's savvy manager, Irving Mills, had called upon him to write a rhapsody, he had obliged with **Creole Rhapsody** almost overnight. It was bigger, a longer work that took up both sides of a 78 record,

and its size duly impressed. Even before that, Paul Whiteman had busied himself with what was called "symphonic" jazz.

All this reflected a kind of inferiority complex among those musicians for whom "jazz" itself was a derogatory term, as well as a snobbism that still infects the parasitical pseudo-intellectuals of the jazz world. As a master of the put-on, Ellington was ready to play their game, and he played it well. Some critics still believe he became obsessed with writing "extended" works, ignoring the fact that his many suites — like suites in previous centuries — consisted of short, contrasting dance movements. Gathered together, these movements conveniently filled the larger area of 12" LPs. In this program, you will hear several divertissements obviously created to titillate his new concert audiences.



Despite the foregoing, the two opening selections are typical examples of the kind of swinging music with which the Ellington band had maintained its supremacy during the Swing Era. **In A Mellotone** evolved through years out of improvisations on the harmonic foundation of **Rose Room**, which Ellington first recorded in 1932. Having rapidly become something of a jazz standard, and a favorite at jam sessions, **In A Mellotone** serves here to introduce Cat Anderson's plunger-muted trumpet and Johnny Hodges's alto saxophone. **Solid Old Man**, written by Ellington in collaboration with Rex Stewart, places considerable emphasis on the five-piece trumpet section, with solo statements from Lawrence Brown and Taft Jordan.

Two excerpts from **Black, Brown & Beige** follow. The spiritual section climaxes with **Come Sunday**, longingly "sung" by Hodges's devotional alto. **Work Song** brings on a number of hard-working soloists,

including Lawrence Brown and Claude Jones on trombone, Cat Anderson and Taft Jordan on trumpet, Oscar Pettiford on bass, and Johnny Hodges again.

Next are two fresh concertos for the 1943 concert season. **Rugged Romeo** is confidently played by Taft Jordan, formerly Chick Webb's trumpet star, and Lawrence Brown is called upon to portray **Circe**. In the original program notes, Ellington was quoted as hoping Brown's solo would "have the same effect Circe had." Now Circe was a formidable sorceress, so one may wonder which effect he had in mind. Extraordinarily versatile though Lawrence Brown was, his virtuosic magic was not like Circe's, whose most infamous feat was the changing of Ulysses's companions into swine.

The Perfume Suite, composed by Ellington and Billy Strayhorn, was premiered in 1944, and two of its most rewarding movements are repeated here. **Dancers In Love**, also known as **Naiveté** and **Stomp for Beginners**, is a happy vehicle for

the piano player, one on which he liked to encourage finger-snapping participation by the audience. **Coloratura** was originally entitled less appropriately **Sophistication**, and here Ellington has Cat Anderson take the spectacular role of "a prima donna who feels she is always making an entrance."

Frankie and Johnny puts the rhythm section back in the spotlight for a joyous romp. Contemporary emphasis on Ellington as a composer tends to underestimate his great importance as a performer, not merely as a "band pianist," but also as a soloist. Here he obviously enjoys himself in a long performance on which the band provides a framework for his, Hamilton's and Pettiford's improvisations. The overhead microphone of the intrepid John Steiner, who fortunately recorded this concert for posterity, sometimes give unusual perspectives on the ensemble and section voicings, but it does justice to Sonny Greer's drumming and the piano as Ellington exercises his left hand in the stride idiom he loved.

Caravan, a big hit in 1937, had already undergone many changes. In this dramatic version, the exotic orientalia is downplayed in favor of solos by the indispensable Lawrence Brown, Jimmy Hamilton and Harry Carney.

Next is **The Tonal Group**. It consists of three pieces whose titles were spelled at different times with not a little eccentricity. They may be considered as **Mellow Ditty**, **Meloditti** or **Rhapsoditty**; as **Fugue** or **Fugaditty**; as **Jam a Ditty**, **Jamaditti** or **Concerto for Jam Band**. In each case, the first is the title under which it was copyrighted. **Mellow Ditty** has four themes and solos by Hodges and Brown. The second movement is an unusual experiment that seeks to apply the jazz idiom to a classic form. The relative delicacy of Hamilton and Carney's clarinets is pitted against the powerful ensemble's recurrent answers. The third places Jordan, Brown, Carney and Hamilton out front of the band as a jamming group in a kind of *concerto grosso*. Rumor had it that Ellington worked on these

ambitious new pieces right up to the last minute and that they were under-rehearsed before the Carnegie premiere. Even so, they should certainly have satisfied those most hungry for something new!

Magenta Haze was the latest in a lengthening series of lyrical mood vehicles for the surpassing artistry of Johnny Hodges. Initiated by Duke Ellington, who wrote this pretty number, too, the series was notably extended by Billy Strayhorn. It gave Hodges a new image in marked contrast with that of the hard-swinging blues master he always remained.

Pitter Panther Patter was the first number recorded by Ellington and bassist Jimmy Blanton at a famous duo session in October 1940. Blanton revolutionized bass playing in jazz, but died tragically young in 1942. In terms of technique and imagination, Pettiford was the best possible replacement for him, and he contributes a personal story to the jaunty, three-chorus routine that largely follows the earlier version.

Altogether it was a great night for the piano player, a precedent-shattering night, for it was rare indeed for him to be featured at length three times.

The Suburbanite features Al Sears, who had the unenviable task of stepping into Ben Webster's footsteps. But "Big Al" had a good-humored, preaching style all his own, and it was immensely popular with segments of the audience in the 1940s. The title indicated residence beyond the city walls, but the arrangement suggests that his suburbia was far from peaceful.

— Stanley Dance

Author of *The World of Duke Ellington*
(Da Capo Press, Inc.)



Duke Ellington

DISC NO. 1

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for full details



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Duke Ellington

DISC NO. 2

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DIGITAL AUDIO

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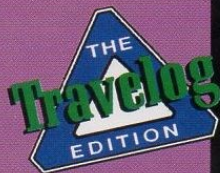
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U N R E L E A S E D M A S T E R S



Duke Ellington

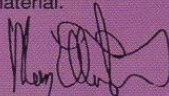
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THE GREAT CHICAGO CONCERTS

Over the years, Duke Ellington performed many concerts and studio sessions which were never available to the public. Having had the opportunity to locate these private tapes, some of which were known only to the Ellington family, others which were stored in the archives of the Library of Congress, it's a great thrill to release such rare and special material.



Mercer Ellington

COMPACT DISC NO. 1

Recorded November 10, 1946 in Chicago.

- 1 Ring Dem Bells (2:24)
- 2 Jumpin' Punks (3:35)
- 3 Beale Street Blues (3:24)
- 4 Memphis Blues (2:26)
- 5 The Golden Feather (3:38)
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 - 17 Improvisation, #2 (2:48)
 - 18 Honeysuckle Rose (3:37)
 - 19 Blue Skies (Trumpet No End) (2:24)

DDD TT= 71:26

COMPACT DISC NO. 2

Recorded January 20, 1946 in Chicago

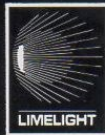
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- 14 Jam a Ditty (3:38)
- 15 Magenta Haze (4:48)
- 16 Pitter Panther Patter (3:17)
- 17 Suburbanite (3:31)

DDD TT= 69:29

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