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(Duke Ellington)
2. **IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD** 5:40  
(Ellington-Kurtz-Mills)
3. **I'M JUST A LUCKY SO AND SO** 5:08  
(D. Ellington-M. David)
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8. **AZURE** 3:13  
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9. **IT DON'T MEAN A THING** 4:17  
(D. Ellington-I. Mills)

**PERSONNEL:**

**ERIC DOLPHY** alto saxophone  
 (#2, 4, 7, 9), flute (#1, 3, 5), clarinet (#6, 8)  
**NATE GERSHMAN** cello  
**JOHN PISANO** guitar  
**HAL GAYLOR** bass  
**CHICO HAMILTON** drums

Produced by Richard Bock

Produced for release by Michael Cuscuna  
 Recorded in Los Angeles on August 22, 1958  
 Transferred in 24-bit by Malcolm Addey  
 from a vinyl test pressing  
 Source: John Cobley

Cover Painting by Sueo Serisawa  
 Original cover design by Milt Zolotow  
 Cover courtesy of the Jazz Record Center, NYC.

Note: The minor flaws at various points in this music are inherent in the source material.

Previously unissued, except for edited versions of #2 and #7 issued on Pacific Jazz LP PJ-10108. An edited version of #1 first appeared on a Pacific Jazz radio sampler (SS540).

## THE ORIGINAL ELLINGTON SUITE

Chico Hamilton's *Ellington Suite*, as we all know it, was recorded in January, 1959 by a reunion of his first quintet with reedman Buddy Collette, guitarist Jim Hall, cellist Fred Katz and bassist Carson Smith and the addition of Collette's successor Paul Horn. Certainly a reunion of the quintet was cause enough for celebration, but using both Horn and Collette, who doubled fluently on clarinet, flutes and saxophones, opened a new arsenal of tonal colors. The idea of an all-Ellington program was icing on the cake. But except for the fact that "Take The A Train" and "Perdido" were played as a medley, this was not a suite. The other nine pieces were arranged and played as individual pieces.

But those other nine pieces were recorded in the spirit of a suite four months earlier with Chico's current group: Eric Dolphy, John Pisano, Nate Gershman and Hal Gaylor. Most of the songs were connected by transitional passages written to take the listener from one song to the other.

This original version of the *Ellington Suite* was even announced on a promotional disc jockey sampler with an edited version of "In A Mellotone." But the record never materialized. And the all-star remake that was finally issued sealed its fate. It's generally thought that Dick Bock didn't like the unorthodox elements in Dolphy's playing. It wouldn't be the last time that Dolphy took heat for his searching innovations. And Chico experienced the same resistance with his next reedman Charles Lloyd.

Bock let out a teaser in the mid-sixties when he issued a Hamilton anthology with the original "In A Sentimental Mood," which fades after the melody and

"I'm Beginning To See The Light," which was edited but still included Dolphy's tantalizing solo.

When I first got into the Blue Note/Pacific Jazz vaults in 1975, one of the first items on my search list was the Dolphy version of Chico's suite. In the past 25 years, many of my searches have borne belated fruit, but the tape for this session was (and still is) nowhere to be found. This music is brought to you thanks to a strange set of circumstances detailed in John Copley's "My Dolphy Discovery" below.

It appears here in the same sequence as the intended LP with the first four selections programmed continuously as side one and the last five as side two. Some of the transitional passages in this suite survived in the later version as introductions for "I'm Just A Lucky So And So," "Day Dream" and "Azure." Others like the intriguing bridge between "In A Mellotone" and "In A Sentimental Mood" were dropped.

Although some details like the original intro to "In A Mellotone" were eliminated on the later version, the arrangements in both versions are essentially the same. The greatest difference is tempo. Except for the three ballads and "I'm Just A Lucky So And So," everything on this first version is taken as a far more relaxed tempo.

On two of those ballads ("Day Dream" and "Azure"), Dolphy plays the standard B-flat clarinet, an instrument that he played during his tenure with Hamilton and rarely thereafter. He plays flute, impeccably as always, on three others, but it is the four selections on which he plays alto saxophone that are the real revelation here. Although he'd been a professional musician in Los Angeles since 1948, he would not be heard to full advantage in a format of extended improvisations until he joined Charles Mingus's quartet in 1960.

This session contains his first recorded solos. On "In A Sentimental Mood" he comes out of the gate like Bird with strings, but his unique way of playing intervals is already in place. "Just A-Sittin' And A-Rockin'" is a wonderfully inventive, bluesy solo with his trademark phrasing and high note punctuations. The great solo on "I'm Beginning To See The Light" shows how strongly Charlie Parker influenced Dolphy, but he has already perfected his off-center and slipped-on-the-ice rhythmic phrasing. Chico and Eric lock up magnificently on "It Don't Mean A Thing" and the saxophonist's solo is closest in spirit and conception to his great work of the '60s.

In the six years of life he had left after this session, the deeply dedicated Dolphy continued to grow and change, giving us some startling and beautiful music along the way. As for Chico Hamilton, he has continued to organize and shape bands with new and developing talent. And although his conception has changed over the years, as of the year 2000, he rarely plays a set without one or two Ellington pieces in it.

— Michael Cuscuna  
March, 2000

#### MY DOLPHY DISCOVERY

On the rare occasions that I travel to other cities, I like to check out second-hand-record stores. I will happily sift through row upon row of discarded LPs in the hope of finding something unusual. On a 1995 trip to my birthplace—Brighton, England—I made the discovery of a lifetime. It was in a store called

Recordland, which is located only four blocks away from where I worked from 1960 to 1964 (my first job).

As a longtime Ellington fan and an admirer of drummer Chico Hamilton, I was excited to find a copy of *Ellington Suite* by the Chico Hamilton Quintet. The rather dirty album cover listed an impressive line-up, including Buddy Collette, Paul Horn and Jim Hall. The price of \$16 seemed reasonable, so I decided to check the condition of the disc. Instead of the conventional printed label on the disc, there was a white label with the following handwritten words: UNRELEASED TAKES CHICO HAMILTON ELLINGTON SUITE 8-22-58. It looked like a test pressing, but the disc looked close to mint, so I bought it.

When I got to my home in Victoria, British Columbia, I played it just once. The music didn't make an impression on me—I was preoccupied with family matters at the time—so I filed it away and forgot all about it.

When a friend, Arnold van Klaveren, told me he had purchased *The Complete Pacific Jazz Recordings* of the Chico Hamilton Quintet box set on Mosaic, I told him about the test pressing of the *Ellington Suite* that I had found in England. He offered to check it against the Mosaic set.

Arnold quickly reported back that *Ellington Suite* was in a different order with different timings. I concluded that the music on my disc must have been a rejected first session. I didn't even consider that the musicians on my disc could be different. Still, I was intrigued by the differences between the two recordings and started to listen carefully to both of them. I quickly noticed that the flute playing on the Mosaic issue (Paul Horn's) was much more controlled and that the alto playing was quite different too, with the alto on my disc sounding closer to Charlie Parker's style.

Then it hit me. I didn't know Collette's style that well, but the alto on my disc sounded a lot like Dolphy. I know Dolphy's music fairly well and once actually heard him live from outside a Stockholm jazz club in 1961. As is well known, Dolphy succeeded Collette and Horn in the Chico Hamilton Quintet; in fact, Collette recommended him. After hearing a few notes of alto, another friend, Terry Finch said, "Dolphy, of course."

As it turned out, three of the tracks from this session with Dolphy appeared on Pacific Jazz samplers in edited form and were on the Mosaic collection. So I had finally solved the mystery. Clearly the music on my disc was rejected, and Chico Hamilton assembled a different group for another recording. At some point, a test pressing of the earlier Dolphy recording was put in an album cover for the released album by someone at the company, and it remained there, lost, for 40 years.

I contacted Alan Saul, who runs a Dolphy web page, Dolphy biographer Vladimir Simosko and Chico Hamilton, who all confirmed its authenticity. Finally, I contacted Michael Cuscuna who had been searching the Pacific Jazz vaults for the original tapes for over 20 years with no luck.

Subsequently, he arranged for the music from my disc to be issued on CD. I have no idea how this disc found its way from Pacific Jazz's offices in Los Angeles to a small store in an English seaside town 36 years later. The important thing is that the music has not been lost. It is the most comprehensive example of Dolphy's debt to Charlie Parker, and it shows how in 1958 he was using Parker's ideas to develop one of the most original and enduring voices in jazz.

— John Cobley  
January 2000

**Pacific  
Jazz**

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# CHICO HAMILTON WITH ERIC DOLPHY

## The Original Ellington Suite

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