

EARL HINES

PLAYS

MJR 814 STEREO

DUKE ELLINGTON

**M
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J**

Master Jazz Recordings, Inc. • New York, U. S. A.

**EARL HINES PLAYS
DUKE ELLINGTON**

**MJR 8114A
SIDE ONE
STEREO**

1. Love You Madly (E.K. Ellington)
2. Sophisticated Lady
(E.K. Ellington, M. Parrish, I. Mills)
3. I'm Beginning To See The Light
(E.K. Ellington, D. George, J. Hodges,
H. James)
4. Warm Valley (E.K. Ellington)
5. Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me
(E.K. Ellington, B. Russell)

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**EARL HINES PLAYS
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**MJR 8114B
SIDE TWO
STEREO**

1. C Jam Blues (E.K. Ellington)
2. Everything But You
(E.K. Ellington, H. James, D. George)
3. Mood Indigo
(E.K. Ellington, I. Mills, A. Bigard)
4. Come Sunday (E.K. Ellington)

EARL HINES PLAYS DUKE ELLINGTON

Earl Hines arrived in New York City late in the evening of Thursday, December 9, 1971. He had come down from Boston on the air-shuttle after a benefit performance with Bobby Hackett and Gene Krupa on behalf of the Newport Jazz Festival. Prior to Boston, he had flown to the jazz festival in San Remo, Italy, to participate in the tribute to Louis Armstrong, and prior to that he had been two weeks with his quartet at the Delmonico Hotel in New York. Before that it had been something else, and before that something else again, and on and on, and it had been a long time since he had been home to Oakland.

We had asked if he would pause in New York City for one day — Friday, December 10 — and do a solo LP based on the work of Duke Ellington before flying to Oakland for Christmas. He said he would.

Earl came to the Edison Hotel studio of National Recording at noon on Friday, December 10. He was well rested and especially pleased with the piano in the studio: a venerable Steinway concert grand that we had seen him play with great enthusiasm on a previous occasion. We are delighted with the result of the afternoon's work which is heard on this LP. Heard on this LP, that is, with one exception, Earl had recorded Mood Indigo for us on June 1, 1971 in a date designed to provide material for future volumes of the Master Jazz Piano Series (same studio, same Steinway). Mood Indigo seemed a must for a definitive Hines statement on Ellington and it is included here, with the eight other tunes.

As far as Earl Hines can remember, he first met Duke Ellington in 1925 when he came to New York from Pittsburgh with Lois Deppe, the singer. The age difference at that time seemed considerable. "They almost had to put me in long pants to take me into The Kentucky Club to meet him", Hines recalled. "I mean, I didn't mean anything to him, he hadn't even heard me play, and he was 'Mr. Ellington' to me, and I felt lucky to be able to shake his hand." He has no other recollection of that first meeting, and his memories took him almost immediately from Ellington to other pianists he met in New York. "We went to hear Lucky Roberts, whom we knew well from his visits to Pittsburgh. He had piano in three separate rooms and he was such a strong player, he kept breaking the wires. His fingers were as big as my thumb, and he was strong and he'd break wires whenever he played, but he just laughed about it. Then there was 'Willie The Lion' ". At this Hines shifts back to the piano himself and plays a kind of roaring crack with both hands in the middle register. "The Lion would always come in and do this and say, 'I'm the Lion and I'm the greatest' ". You could still see a bit of awe in Hines as he remembered his reaction, as a nineteen or twenty year old strapping from Pittsburgh, before The Lion. And then he starts talking about his own demenorator before the greats — "I never challenged anyone, I mean I like to play piano, but I never got around to challenging. I just sat and listened and watched what they did and so later if I needed something it was already there".

There is certainly great respect between Ellington and Hines. They are exactly the kind of friends you would expect them to be as contemporaries in the same line of work, and world renowned each in his own right and way, out of different talents and traditions and temperaments and accomplishments. Hines makes it a point to go to hear Duke when they are playing in the same town. Duke always welcomes him to the piano, and the results of this are usually electric. The Hines visits to the Ellington stands at the Rainbow Grill in New York City are, for example, legendary.

If Hines has been particularly close to an Ellingtonian it was to Johnny Hodges. There was both great friendship and musical affinity between them, as the performances in this album of tunes associated with Hodges — like Come Sunday and Warm Valley — suggest.

But setting all this aside, this album has to do with Hines as a piano interpreter of Ellington's music. Duke Ellington has, of course, written so much that one LP can only suggest the way in which Hines handles it. But much of Ellington's work is a piece and if Hines plays tunes of different tempo, and different moods and different popularities, and does this all in a relatively short period of time and with the thought in mind that this is the way he wants to play Duke, we get a pretty good idea of how "Earl Hines Plays Duke Ellington", after all.

Hines has a great facility with this music. He made the majority of these performances in a single take: in fact, this was true of most of the more or less standard numbers in the set: Sophisticated Lady, C Jam Blues, and Mood Indigo. He did two takes of Everything But You, Love You Madly and Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me, and in each case the second of those recorded is the one heard here.

The most striking aspects of Hines artistry and affinity for Ellington is the ease with which he takes tunes previously unknown to him, studies the lead sheet for a few minutes and then fashions his own inimitable versions of the hitherto unknown material. He had never played Everything But You or Come Sunday or Warm Valley before this date. The music for Everything But You and Come Sunday arrived at Earl's hotel the night before, and perhaps he scanned it before coming to the studio. I brought the Warm Valley lead sheet to the studio with me, and although he really felt somewhat uncomfortable about playing it, he worked through it, expressed reservations, finally agreed to try a couple of choruses, if for no other reason than to shut up the producer, and then spun off the performance heard here in one take. And the same was true with Come Sunday.

When we conceived an "Earl Hines Plays Duke Ellington" LP, our thought was that it would be most appropriate for the pre-eminent jazz pianist to play the music of the pre-eminent jazz composer. It is perhaps true that no one plays Ellington better than Ellington. But there is ample evidence in all varieties of music, including jazz, that the work of the composer is given additional character and meaning through the work of the interpreter. And if there is to be an interpreter of Ellington, who should it be but Earl Hines?

SIDE ONE

1. **LOVE YOU MADLY**
[E. K. Ellington, Tempo Music Inc., ASCAP, 4:21]
2. **SOPHISTICATED LADY**
[E. K. Ellington, M. Pacht, I. Mills, Mills Music Co., ASCAP, 4:10]
3. **I'M BEGINNING TO SEE THE LIGHT**
[E. K. Ellington, D. George, J. Hodges, H. James, Jung, Nickel, Rost, Inc., ASCAP, 4:12]
4. **WARM VALLEY**
[E. K. Ellington, Robbins Music Co., ASCAP, 5:29]
5. **DO NOTHING TILL YOU HEAR FROM ME**
[E. K. Ellington, B. Russell, Robbins Music Co., ASCAP, 3:42]

SIDE TWO

1. **C JAM BLUES**
[E. K. Ellington, Robbins Music Co., ASCAP, 3:30]
2. **EVERYTHING BUT YOU**
[E. K. Ellington, H. James, D. George, Tempo Music, Inc., ASCAP, 4:35]
3. **MOOD INDIGO**
[E. K. Ellington, I. Mills, A. Bigard, Mills Music Co., ASCAP, 6:51]
4. **COME SUNDAY**
[E. K. Ellington, Tempo Music Inc., ASCAP, 5:09]

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