



Saturday Night Function

Duke Ellington and his famous Orchestra
(PERIOD 1927-9)

"HIS MASTER'S VOICE" LONG PLAY 33 $\frac{1}{2}$ R.P.M. RECORD



"HIS MASTER'S VOICE"



TRADE MARK
REGD.

LONG PLAY DLP.1094
(OXAV.298) 33

"SATURDAY NIGHT FUNCTION"

- (1) Jubilee Stomp (Ellington) Lawrence Wright, Mills Music, BIEM, NOB
 - (2) The Mooche (Ellington-Mills) Laffeur, BIEM
 - (3) Flaming Youth (Ellington) Mecolico, Mills Music, BIEM, NOB
 - (4) Saturday Night Function (Ellington-Bigard) Mecolico, Mills Music, BIEM, NOB
 - (5) High Life (Ellington) Mecolico, Mills Music, BIEM, NOB
- DUKE ELLINGTON & HIS FAMOUS ORCHESTRA

MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN

"HIS MASTER'S VOICE"



TRADE MARK
REGD.

LONG PLAY DLP.1094
(OXAV.307) 33

"SATURDAY NIGHT FUNCTION"

- (1) Grease Love (Ellington-Miley-Jackenn) (with Vocal Refrains) Lawrence Wright, Mills Music, BIEM, NOB
 - (2) Got Everything But You (Palmer-Razaf) Lawrence Wright
 - (3) Black and Tan Fantasy (Ellington-Miley) Lawrence Wright, Mills Music, BIEM, NOB
 - (4) East Saint Louis Tomatoes (Ellington-Miley) Lawrence Wright, Mills Music, BIEM, NOB
 - (5) Black Beauty (Ellington) Lawrence Wright, Mills Music, BIEM, NOB
- DUKE ELLINGTON & HIS FAMOUS ORCHESTRA

MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN

"Saturday Night Function" ^{DLP} 1094

DUKE ELLINGTON and his famous Orchestra

SIDE 1

- Band 1—Creole Love Call
- Band 2—Got Everything But You
- Band 3—Black and Tan Fantasic
- Band 4—East Saint Louis Toodle-Do
- Band 5—Jack Beauty

SIDE 2

- Band 1—Jubilee Stomp
- Band 2—The Mooche
- Band 3—Flaming Youth
- Band 4—Saturday Night Function
- Band 5—High Life

The development of big band jazz has been one of increasing power for the arranger at the expense of the soloist, and of a preoccupation with technique which calls for extreme proficiency rather than improvisatory ability. In its final stages it reaches the type of music played by Stan Kenton and his orchestra, to which the word jazz can hardly be applied at all. This music has no roots in the early Negro folksong and is far more influenced by contemporary European composers. The retention of a genuine jazz feeling in a large band which must, of necessity, involve a great deal of scored work, is a problem which has exercised the mind of a great many musicians, and by common consent the Negro bands have been far more successful in this respect than their white counterparts. The larger swing groups of the thirties, led by Jimmy Lunceford, Count Basie, Earl Hines and Chick Webb did retain an essential jazz "feeling" even though a great deal of the music was arranged, but the decline of swing music led to a very arid period when most big band jazz seemed to have lost its bearing in a morass of technique divorced from content, and in an unfruitful toying at second hand with unrelated ideas from some of the European "moderns". Almost alone in his search for a valid expression in the big band field which did not depart from certain jazz essentials, was Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington, whose work as an arranger and leader of a big band over a period of thirty years has placed him as one of the great pioneers in the jazz idiom.

Duke Ellington is a unique genius. Although a pleasing instrumentalist (on piano), his work in this respect is certainly not comparable to that of many others and his tremendous contribution to jazz has been in the role of leader, arranger and composer. He has an astonishing talent for bringing out the best in his musicians and writes with individual soloists in mind. His arrangements have a free-flowing quality and always leave a great deal of room for improvisation. At all times his themes seem to be based on the music of his race, and he has expressed the view that he is really a mouthpiece for his people and that his tunes are basically all taken from the rich store of Negro music. While this may be the case, there is little doubt that as a composer he is in the very front rank, and the late Constant Lambert asserted that he was one of the most important of our period. Certainly, he is about the only jazz writer who has been at all successful in extended form and his lengthier works such as *Black, Brown and Beige*, *Perfume Suite* and *New World's A Comin'* have received a great

deal of critical acclaim. Curiously enough, Ellington has a considerable streak of caution in his make-up and many of his more daring compositions remain unplayed for fear of hostile audience reaction.

The ten items which comprise this long play record come from the period 1927-9. This was the time when the Ellington style was moulded and many of his most famous compositions were written. The gathering together of these ten classic performances on one record affords the listener a fascinating opportunity to study the method and mind of the Duke at a formative period in his development, and the first thing that will strike one is the fact that all the essential ingredients of the Ellington style were already in being. One has the opportunity, in addition, of hearing many of the great Ellington musicians of the past, including the late Bubber Miley, Johnny Hodges, Barney Bigard and Arthur Whetsol. Two tracks feature the now very well known Ellington device of having a vocalist sing in instrumental fashion. The band at this time may not have had the polish of some of the later ones, but for sheer intensity and freshness it has never been bettered.

Comment on the individual tracks is hardly necessary as they will be very well known to most enthusiasts. *Black and Tan Fantasic* and *East Saint Louis Toodle-Do* are amongst Duke's most widely known compositions and are notable for the work of that astonishing musician Bubber Miley. Miley was a genius with a mute, and his expressiveness and versatility as a "growl" trumpeter have never been equalled. *The Mooche* and *Creole Love Call* are almost as famous and both feature the voice used in the manner related in the last paragraph. *Saturday Night Function* is a gay and rousing number with excellent Bigard clarinet. *Flaming Youth* is an up-tempo number which is again notable for the fierce drive of Miley's solo work. *Jubilee Stomp* and *High Life* are in a similar vein and all the soloists acquit themselves brilliantly. In fact, there is not one track that is not, in its own way, a little gem both as a composition and as an example of superlative jazz musicianship.

It is always intriguing to look back on the beginnings of a great talent. In this case the music is as fresh today as when it was recorded and although most of the numbers on this record have since been recorded again by Ellington, these are the definitive versions. Genius is an over-played word today, but in the case of Duke Ellington it can be applied without fear of causing the user embarrassment at a later date.

Note by Albert J. McCarthy

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LONG



PLAY

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The use of "EMITEX" cleaning material (available from Record Dealers) will preserve this record and keep it free from dust.