



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DUKE!

Duke Ellington's birthday was celebrated affectionately and enthusiastically when he was at home. And when he was seventy, of course, it was celebrated in the White House, where he was presented with the Medal of Freedom. But when on the Road with his band, as he so often was, his habit was not to make anything of it publicly. A birthday was a birthday, and usually a workday, too.

By a strange coincidence of booking, two consecutive birthdays found him playing in the same place, McElroy's Ballroom in Portland, Oregon. It was fortunate that on each occasion recording engineer Wally Heider was present with his equipment to preserve the music on tape. Students of the jazz past owe him a great deal.

While a candled cake and champagne were unlikely on such birthdays, there would nevertheless be a kind of glow on the stand when the leader and his men were united. The conventional wishes would have been expressed by the veterans closest to him in age, and altogether a good feeling would prevail as the stresses and strains normal to the business were put aside.

As usual at dances, the band began without its leader and Harry Carney set the tempos. While Ellington talked to management, special guests or fans in the dressing room, the band played danceable music at comfortable tempos as the patrons arrived. If on other occasions the musicians sounded tired or looked sullen, that only augmented the impact of their charismatic piano player when he joined them. In this case they are halfway through their section when we enter, just in time to hear George Shearing's **Lullaby of Birdland**, with typical solos by Paul

Gonsalves, Clark Terry and Cat Anderson. Then, after Jimmy Hamilton's surpassing clarinet skills have enhanced Vincent Youmans's **Time on My Hands**, Willie Cook is featured in two choruses on **Don't Worry 'Bout Me**, an attractive ballad that suits his tasteful style particularly well. He was, in his leader's opinion, potentially the best first trumpet in jazz, and as soloist he tended to preserve the lyrical tradition of which Artie Whetsol and Shorty Baker were notable exponents.

At this point Ellington comes out to the piano and promptly introduces himself with two choruses on his theme, **Take the A Train**, before handing over solo responsibility to Ray Nance and his trumpet. One way he could celebrate his birthday was by playing more solos, so on **Liza** he takes three whole choruses. Because the number was long a party piece for pianists, this was justifiable enough, but the exuberant confidence with which he plays shows that he was enjoying himself. Clark Terry, Paul Gonsalves, Britt Woodman, Harry Carney and Rick Henderson are also featured here. Ellington opens **Creole Love Call**, too, and provides his usual authoritative support to Willie Cook, Ray Nance and Jimmy Hamilton. He also plays the opening chorus on **Boodah**, where Nance and Hamilton are again the soloists, and the first two choruses on **Stomp, Look and Listen!** This last has a spirited trumpet exchange between Cook and Nance, and solos from Hamilton, Woodman and Anderson.

To round off the first part of this birthday evening, there's a joyous version of **Happy-Go-Lucky Local**, on which the piano player's presence is felt as well as heard. Soloing at varying length are Procope, Nance, Carney, Gonsalves, Hamilton and Anderson.

STANLEY DANCE

author of The World of Duke Ellington

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Happy Birthday, Duke!

Duke Ellington and His Orchestra

DUKE ELLINGTON, piano
WILLIE COOK, trumpet
CAT ANDERSON, trumpet
CLARK TERRY, trumpet
RAY NANCE, trumpet, violin & vocal
BRITT WOODMAN, trombone
QUENTIN JACKSON, trombone
JUAN TIZOL, valve trombone
RUSSELL PROCOPE, alto sax & clarinet
RICK HENDERSON, alto sax
PAUL GONSALVES, tenor sax
JIMMY HAMILTON, clarinet & tenor sax
HARRY CARNEY, baritone sax & bass clarinet
WENDELL MARSHALL, bass
BUTCH BALLARD, drums
JIMMY GRISSOM, vocal

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Duke Ellington and His Orchestra

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DUKE!

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | LULLABY OF BIRDLAND [2:42]
(B.Y. FORSTER/GEORGE SHEARING, 1952)
<i>LONGITUDE MUSIC (BMI)</i> | 7 | BOODAH [3:58]
(BILLY STRAYHORN) - <i>TEMPO MUSIC</i> |
| 2 | TIME ON MY HANDS
(YOU IN MY ARMS) [5:32]
(HAROLD ADAMSON/MACK GORDON/
VINCENT YOUMANS, 1930)
<i>EMI MILLER/WARNER-CHAPPELL/HAROLD
ADAMSON MUSIC</i> | 8 | STOMP, LOOK & LISTEN [4:05]
(DUKE ELLINGTON, 1944) - <i>TEMPO MUSIC</i> |
| 3 | DON'T WORRY 'BOUT ME [4:11]
(TED KOEHEL/RUBE BLOOM, 1939)
<i>MILLS MUSIC</i> | 9 | HAPPY-GO-LUCKY LOCAL [5:22]
(DUKE ELLINGTON/BILLY STRAYHORN, 1947)
<i>TEMPO MUSIC/FAMOUS MUSIC</i> |
| 4 | TAKE THE "A" TRAIN [4:56]
(BILLY STRAYHORN, 1941) - <i>TEMPO MUSIC</i> | ALL SONGS ASCAP (except <i>Lullaby of Birdland</i> - BMI) | |
| 5 | LIZA (ALL THE
CLOUDS'LL ROLL AWAY) [5:51]
(GERSHWIN/KAHN/GERSHWIN, 1929)
<i>WARNER /CHAPPELL</i> | PRODUCED BY DUKE ELLINGTON
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DIGITAL EDITING & MASTERING:
BILL LIGHTNER, K-DISC MASTERING
Photo courtesy of Michael Ochs Archives | |
| 6 | CREOLE LOVE CALL [4:02]
(DUKE ELLINGTON, 1928)
<i>FAMOUS MUSIC</i> | | |

This is volume one of five **HAPPY BIRTHDAY DUKE!** collections, which also include Laserlight CDs 15784, 15785, 15786 & 15787.

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Happy Birthday, Duke! The Birthday Sessions 1

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