



HAPPY BIRTHDAY DUKE!

Duke Ellington's second birthday ball in McElroy's Ballroom continues with **V.I.P. Boogie** and **Jam with Sam**, two numbers almost invariably played together. The first features Harry Carney and Jimmy Hamilton. In the second, Ellington introduces all the soloists by name, concluding with Cat Anderson and his triumphant coda.

Bunny Hop Mambo is a relatively discreet acknowledgement of an idiom then popular in the country's ballrooms. Ellington has the main solo responsibility, happily playing chorus after chorus as though he were in Havana or Spanish Harlem until the band, Jimmy Hamilton and Cat Anderson take over. The trumpet player and the pianist share a comic coda. There's no great response from the dancers for this, but evidently the musicians enjoyed the change of direction, so Ellington launches them on a humorous, Latinized version of Wingy Manone's old hit, **Isle of Capri**.

Next are two versions of the band's theme, **Take the A Train**. The first gets Ray Nance's hilarious vocal routine of singing, scating and quoting. It draws a not unadmiring comment from Ellington: "You're crazy, man!" Then it is Paul Gonsalves's turn, at first slow and thoughtful, but after doubling the tempo the music pours out fast and furious. The quick thinking involved here derives from a rich harmonic knowledge that was at least partly the result of his earlier experience as a guitar player.

Vocalist Jimmy Grissom returns to the microphone for **Flamingo**. Arranged by Billy Strayhorn, this gave Ellington a big hit in 1940. Although it was an untypical addition to the band's repertoire, it drew a new audience, one that had already become too addicted to the singers with the big bands. Grissom indulges here in some of the falsetto singing for which his uncle was famous with Jimmie Lunceford. His following versions of **I Got It Bad** and **I'm Just a Lucky So and So** are much more worthy of him, particularly that of the latter. Note how he ends the song, as though rebelling against the restraint his role imposed, as though the old blues line about hollering like a mountain jack had passed through his mind and released him. The veneer of a smooth, sentimental balladeer often tended to slip in Grissom's case, in a way that is, to a jazz fan, both amusing and endearing. He had, of course, proved himself as a blues shouter the previous year on a number then called **She Moved** (Laserlight 15785). Here it is called, more appropriate! **Ballin' the Blues**, and you get virtually the same routines and soloists. Some parts are better, like the encore, and some are not so good, but both are performed with a wild spirit that occasionally possessed the Ellington band on dance dates, when the prime objective was to lay down a big, all-encompassing beat, and to swing. The recording suggests that there was not such a big crowd at McElroy's as the previous year, and the applause has not been so enthusiastic, but the blues, ballin' or swingin', always reaches an audience, as it does here. After Grissom's persistent cries of "'Bye, 'bye!" end, Ellington calls on the band to sign off with **Satin Doll** as he thanks the people, invites them up to the Seattle Trianon the following Saturday Night, and assures them that they are loved madly.

STANLEY DANCE

author of The World of Duke Ellington
(*Da Capo Press*)

Happy Birthday, Duke!

Duke Ellington and His Orchestra

DUKE ELLINGTON, piano
WILLIE COOK, trumpet
CLARK TERRY, trumpet
CAT ANDERSON, trumpet
RAY NANCE, trumpet, violin & vocal
BRITT WOODMAN, trombone
QUENTIN JACKSON, trombone
JOHN SANDERS, trombone
RUSSELL PROCOPE, also sax and clarinet
RICK HENDERSON, alto sax
PAUL GONSALVES, tenor sax
JIMMY HAMILTON, clarinet & tenor sax
HARRY CARNEY, baritone sax & bass clarinet
WENDELL MARSHALL, bass
DAVE BLACK, drums
JIMMY GRISSOM, vocal

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DUKE!

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

- | | | | | |
|---|---|--------|----|--|
| 1 | V.I.P.'s BOOGIE
(DUKE ELLINGTON)
<i>TEMPO MUSIC</i> | [2:42] | 8 | I GOT IT BAD, AND THAT A'INT GOOD / I'M JUST A LUCKY SO-AND-SO [3:40]
(DUKE ELLINGTON/PAUL WEBSTER, 1941)
<i>EMI ROBBINS</i>
(DUKE ELLINGTON/MACK DAVID, 1945)
<i>PARAMOUNT MUSIC</i> |
| 2 | JAM WITH SAM
(DUKE ELLINGTON)
<i>FAMOUS MUSIC</i> | [3:58] | 9 | BALLIN' THE BLUES [9:20]
(DUKE ELLINGTON, 1953)
<i>TEMPO MUSIC</i> |
| 3 | BUNNY HOP MAMBO [3:45]
(RAY ANTHONY/LEONARD ANLETTI)
<i>MOONLIGHT MUSIC</i> | [3:45] | 10 | SATIN DOLL [0:47]
(DUKE ELLINGTON, 1953) - <i>FAMOUS MUSIC</i> |
| 4 | ISLE OF CAPRI [3:25]
(WILL GROSZ/JIMMY KENNEDY, 1934)
<i>POLYGRAM INT'L./ANNE-RACHEL MUSIC</i> | [3:25] | | |
| 5 | TAKE THE "A" TRAIN [3:49]
VOCAL BY RAY NANCE | [3:49] | | |
| 6 | TAKE THE "A" TRAIN [3:49]
(INSTRUMENTAL)
(BILLY STRAYHORN, 1941) - <i>TEMPO MUSIC</i> | [3:49] | | |
| 7 | FLAMINGO [2:52]
(TED GROUYA/ED ANDERSON, 1941)
<i>EDWIN H. MORRIS</i> | [2:52] | | |

PRODUCED BY DUKE ELLINGTON

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ALL SONGS ASCAP

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