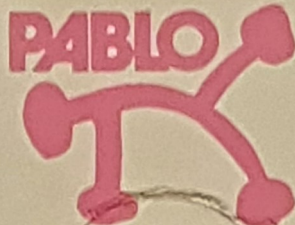


The Intimate Ellington



AMBLIN
STEREO 2310-787



THE INTIMATE DUKE ELLINGTON

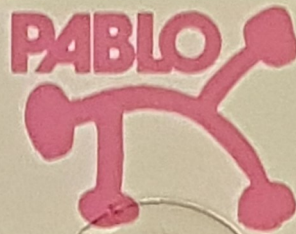
2310-787-A
(PP-2001)

Side 1
Stereo

1. MOON MAIDEN (D. Ellington) 2:42
2. EDWARD THE FIRST (D. Ellington) 3:20
3. SYMPHONETTE (D. Ellington) 5:03
4. INTIMATE INTERLUDE (D. Ellington) 5:01
5. SOME SUMMER FUN (D. Ellington) 5:18

Produced by Duke Ellington
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THE INTIMATE DUKE ELLINGTON

2310-787-B
(PP-2002)

Side 2
Stereo

1. LAYIN' ON MELLOW (D. Ellington) 2:13
2. EULB (D. Ellington) 2:34
3. TENZ (D. Ellington) 2:27
4. I GOT IT BAD AND THAT AIN'T GOOD (D. Ellington/Webster) 5:30
5. SOPHISTICATED LADY (D. Ellington/Parish/Mills) 4:57
6. EDWARD THE SECOND (D. Ellington) 5:44

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The Intimate Ellington

PABLO RECORDS 2310-741

Side 1.

1. Moon Maiden (B)
2. Edward The First (A)
3. Symphonette (H)
4. Intimate Interlude (G)
5. Some Summer Fun (D)

Side 2.

1. Layin' On Mellow (C)
2. Eulo (I)
3. Tenz (I)

4. I Got It Bad And That Ain't Good (E)
(Ellington/Weaber)
Robbins Music Corp./ASCAP

5. Sophisticated Lady (E)
(Ellington/Parish/Mills)
Mills Music Inc./ASCAP

6. Edward The Second (F)
All tunes except as noted are by Duke Ellington
Tompo Music Inc./ASCAP

(A) Duke Ellington, piano; Paul Kontzile, bass; Rufus Jones, drums. 25 April 1969.

(B) Duke Ellington, celeste and vocal. 14 July 1969.

(C) Duke Ellington, piano; Willie Cook, trumpet; Lawrence Brown, trombone; Johnny Hodges, Russell Procope, Paul Goncalves, Harold Ashby, Harry Carney, reeds; Paul Kondzile, bass; Rufus Jones, drums. 22 August 1969.

(D) Duke Ellington, piano; Wild Bill Davis, organ; Cootie Williams, Mercer Ellington, Fred Stone, Cal Anderson, trumpets; Booty Wood, Julian Priestler, Chuck Connors, trombones; Russell Procope, Norris Turney, Paul Goncalves, Harold Ashby, Harry Carney, reeds; Joe Benjamin, bass; Rufus Jones, drums. 15 June 1970.

(E) As (D). Money Johnson and Al Rubin replace Mercer Ellington and Fred Stone, trumpets; Malcolm Taylor replaces Julian Priestler, trombone. 9 December 1970.

(F) Duke Ellington, piano; Joe Benjamin, bass; Rufus Jones, drums. 1 February 1971.

(G) As (E), but without Wild Bill Davis, organ. 2 February 1971.

(H) Duke Ellington, piano; Cootie Williams, Money Johnson, Eddie Preston, Richard Williams, trumpet; Booty Wood, Malcolm Taylor, Chuck Connors, trombones; Norris Turney, Buddy Pearson, Paul Goncalves, Harold Ashby,

Harry Carney, reeds; Joe Benjamin, bass; Rufus Jones, drums. 6 May 1971.

- (I) As (H). Mercer Ellington replaces Eddie Preston, trumpet; Russell Procope added to reed section. 29 June 1971.

All sessions recorded in New York City.

Produced by Duke Ellington
Liner notes by Stanley Dance
Photography by Norman Granz
Cover design and layout by Norman Granz/Gribbitt!
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It is probably not too much to say that some of the happiest hours of Duke Ellington's life were spent in recording studios at related sessions like those illustrated here. He might call them when the band was laying off as a means of getting some return from those of its members permanently on a regular salary, but he always liked to hear next day what he had written overnight, and sometimes the summations to appear went out at very short notice. If the music were of an experimental character or not completely worked out, the session took place with a degree of secrecy, quite unlike those commissioned by major labels and attended by an enormous retinue of relatives, friends and fans. The fact that he was paying all the expenses of the date himself did not guarantee his own punctuality. He often came in late to find that musicians who had arrived on time had wandered off on a variety of errands. Johnny Hodges, say, had gone out to buy grapes for his monkey, and Paul Goncalves was across the street having "breakfast" in a bar but so long as the bassist and trumpeters were present Ellington was unperturbed. If he had brought new music with him, he would give it to his faithful side-de-camp Tom Whaley, who would begin copying out parts in one corner of the studio. Then he would turn to the rhythm section for some warming-up exercises, or if the more important soloists had taken their places he might call for an ad-lib blues. In between, Whaley would be complaining about the composer's writing, and the composer would be accusing Whaley of mistakes and tardiness. There are both fringed and unfringed performances here, not to mention a remarkably zesty feeling of spontaneity. No one had a greater appreciation of the freshly creative, and more misty of the mechanical, than Ellington. Because he had often made up his mind about which of the horns should be featured on a new composition, the piano is here more prominent than usual. Primarily he wanted to hear what he had written, so he

himself played those passages that would later be allotted to one or other of his soloists.

The opening selection is unique. Ellington's imagination had been stimulated by the thought of men walking around on the moon, and he had not uncharacteristically visualized their encountering some chicks up there. In anticipation of the landing, he wrote lyrics to *Moon Maiden*, a part of *The Ballet of the Flying Saucers*, which was originally conceived as a play. Like other lyrics of his, these contained felicitous intimal rhymes that came off the tongue very effectively, as though phrased by blunder-mutes brass. For example:

*I'm just a fly-by-night guy,
But for you I might be quite the
right do-right guy.*

He had recorded the number twice as an instrumental, and with at least a couple of singers, but each time he remained dissatisfied. I had noticed a celeste in the ancients used for vocal separation, and at the end of a mixing session I suggested it might give a "moony" effect.

"See what it sounds like," he said before going into the studio and making the version.

"What do you think?" he asked afterwards.

"I like it. See what you think."
"You didn't record it?"

The tape deck had fortunately been loaded beforehand, but although he was amazed he did not consider releasing it. Nevertheless, it served as a rehearsal and he sang the number again next day for ABC Television in recognition of the Apollo II launching, and he made some typical observations.

"Yes," he said. *Moon Maiden* represents my public debut as a vocalist, but I don't really sing. I'm a pencil cat. My other number will be *Let's Go to See the Dark Side of Your Moon, Baby*. Everybody dreams about going to the moon, but I have too many things here, too many projects I haven't completed. Extraneous people go to the moon? Extraneous have always been accepted as poetic license. But if there's a diamond dust up there, just think how poor it's going to make the South Africa!"

Edward I and *Edward II* are investments with the rhythm section, an area in which he demanded tenacity and was intensely critical when it was lacking. His own authority is irrefragable here.

Symphonette, also known as *Sugar Hill Penthouse* and *Creamy Brown*, is part of *Beige in the Black, Brown and Beige* suite, sections of which Ellington often returned to affectionately in the recording studio, just as he did to *Harlem*. His purpose in such cases seemed not so much to make the record as to hear how it sounded when played by his current band. The baritone

saxophone solo is, of course, by the imitable Harry Carney.

Intimate Interlude features Carney on another instrument he played very well, the bass clarinet. Here he and Norris Turney indulge in a graceful blues exchange, a talented multi-instrumentalist. Turney is one of the few jazz musicians with a distinctive personality on flute.

Some Summer Fun is more blues. The piano player sets the pace and is followed by Cootie Williams, Paul Goncalves, Julian Priestler, Wild Bill Davis and Harold Ashby.

Layin' On Mellow was composed as the theme for a jazz show Malcolm James (Ellington's nephew) and this writer conducted for a while over WBAI in New York. Neither show nor theme had a title until Ellington wrote it. The soloist on the track is the peerless Johnny Hodges, and if the ending is inconclusive it is because the amateur disc-jockeys were supposed to have begun talking by then!

Eulo and *Tenz*, as performed here, are short vehicles for piano and ensemble. Not too much significance should be attached to the code titles, which were affixed while Ellington was simultaneously working on what became *The Top Gava Suite* and *The Afro-Eurobar Eclipse*. Virtually the same music was sometimes copyrighted twice because of his little changes and last-minute modifications. During this "erotic" period various visitors were pressed into duty as auxiliary percussionists, including the formidable Jo Jones on tambourine. "Let's be primitive," Ellington requested, "but not baroque!"

Wild Bill Davis wrote the arrangement of *I Got It Bad* as a showcase for vocalist Bobbie Gordon, alias Nell Brooks. She was not present at the session when it was first tried out by the band and Cootie Williams. Ellington was immediately impressed by it. "That's got to go in the book," he said. *Sophisticated Lady* again features Norris Turney on flute in a duet with Harry Carney, the latter this time on baritone saxophone but not demonstrating his singular breathing technique.

At the end of each session Ellington would normally retire to the control room to listen to playback and make telephone calls while the engineer ran off reference tapes for him to take home. As the musicians packed up their instruments he would often announce over the speaker system some unearthy hour when the bus was due to leave the hotel next day, and then add in an affected Texas drawl, "Thank y'all!"

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