

STORYVILLE



DUKE ELLINGTON
AN INTIMATE PIANO SESSION



DUKE ELLINGTON
AN INTIMATE PIANO SESSION



DUKE ELLINGTON AN INTIMATE PIANO SESSION

1 - 16: Mediasound Studio A, New York City, NY August 25, 1972.

Personnel: 1 - 16: Duke Ellington (p). · 5 and 6: Add Anita Moore (vo).
13, 14 and 15: Add Tony Watkins (vo). · 7: Add Unk. (dm).

Bonus tracks: 17 - 20: Concert Hall De Doelen, Rotterdam, The Netherlands,
November 7, 1969 ("Afterparty" from the 2nd concert).

Personnel: Duke Ellington (p), Wild Bill Davis (org), Victor Gaskin (b), Rufus Jones (dm).

Track 1 - 16:

The scene is 311 West 57 Street, New York, Mediasounds studio A, the date Friday August 25th 1972. Duke Ellington was having an engagement with a smaller group at The Rainbow Grill, as he had had several times before, finishing the gig on the following night.

But on the 25th he chose also to go to the recording studio, just himself at the piano together with his two band singers Anita Moore and Tony Watkins, to record some pieces which were not played so often, but partially featured at his stay in Wisconsin the month before.

The recordings remained in his "stockpile" until now, this being the first commercial issue of these beautiful pieces. The order of the numbers presented on this CD – all complete takes – follows the order of the original recording tapes.

After a little warm-up on I'm Afraid (not included here), a tune he repeated full length later in the session, Duke got into The Anticipation, a piece composed as the first part of The Uwisi Suite, honoring The University of Wisconsin, and premiered the month before at Wisconsin Union Theatre in Madison. According to Duke's own introduction at the concert the title refers to his anticipation of coming to Wisconsin and refresh old memories. The piece was also played at two "masterclass" performances during Ellington's week-long stay in Wisconsin, where Duke also performed several other rarely played compositions, some of which we find at this session.

Le Sucrier Velours, also called Do Not Disturb, a movingly beautiful tune, was composed by Duke back in 1936. The piece was later used in The Queen's Suite from 1959. While it originally was a band arrangement, featuring Ray Nance, he tended to perform it as a piano solo during the 1960s and 70s. At this session Duke played two versions, the first one a chorus longer than the second.

Lotus Blossom, a Billy Strayhorn composition from the mid-forties, was originally written for a Johnny Hodges small band session with Strayhorn at the piano under the title Charlotte Russe. It became however better known under the new title, played by Duke Ellington as a piano solo in Duke's arrangement, often as an encore at concerts in the 1960s and 70s.

A Blue Mural From Two Perspectives is allegedly a joint composition by Ellington and Strayhorn. After his first rendition here of the piece Duke says, as you can hear: "This piano is too honest, it shows all my flaws, shows all my blemishes". I played this piece and other pieces for Billy Moore Jr. back in the 1980s. He said "For me Duke was one of the most interesting pianists. I wouldn't put him up with pianists like Art Tatum or Teddy Wilson. You might say they are technically more expert, but they didn't have the substance in their playing that Duke put in his playing. You would listen to his piano, and play it over and over again, and be really amazed at what he was doing. But he would be the first one to declare he was no Art Tatum." I'm Afraid (of loving you too much), is also known under the title Here Goes, a composition by Duke from the late 1940s with lyrics by Don George. It is sung here by Anita Moore, whom we also hear on I Didn't Know About You, a tune composed in 1942 and originally called Home, then Sentimental Lady, until it got its lasting title when lyrics by Bob Russell were added in 1944. In spite of the beautiful singing by Anita Moore on both titles, the real treat here is Duke's piano playing.

Loco Madi, a piece hinting at a Madison train, was the last part of The Uwisi Suite in a full band arrangement. Only part of it is played here, where Duke is joined by "a jive drummer" as he said. Some discographies suggest the drummer is Aziz Lateef, a name sometimes used as a synonym for Emmanuel Abdul-Rahim, who played with Duke for the My People show (Storyville CD 101 8430), and later for The Jaywalker (Storyville CD 101 8390). I played the track for Abdul-Rahim, who denies being present at this session, and suggests it might be an amateur drummer joining in for a short while. After another take of Lotus Blossom Duke plays his suite-like piece New World A-Comin', premiered at Ellington's second Carnegie Hall concert in December 1943 (Storyville CD 103 834). His version here is one of his most beautiful, a brilliant display and development of the various contrasting themes, and truly one of Ellington's most satisfying long compositions.

Melancholia was first heard by the public on the Capitol Album Piano Reflections, recorded in 1953. Compared to the original recording Duke's version here is somewhat longer, and the tempo slower, depicting the intense feeling of deep sadness.

Duke played Single Petal Of A Rose, first recorded as part of The Queen's Suite in 1959, many times during his career. To me this rendition ranks among his very best, played as if he – at this recording session – had the need to come out of the melancholic mood of the previous piece. The Blues Ain't from the 1943 suite Black, Brown And Beige, is sung by Tony Watkins. The number gets a very dramatic atmosphere through its rubato character led by Duke's intense piano playing. A great performance.

Before the recording of Come Sunday, Ellington's psalm from Black, Brown And Beige, Duke shouted "turn off the lights", and Tony Watkins responded with one of his most concentrated and intense renditions of the song ever, partly sung in English, partly in Hebrew. Duke's piano playing is likewise a gem, demonstrating why Dizzy Gillespie once said "as an accompanist, Duke is it!".

Tony Watkins' last piece was a number originally used for My People from 1963, My Mother, My Father And Love, also known as Heritage. Duke performed it many times after, sometimes even with himself as the vocalist, reciting his own lyrics. No doubt the words meant a great deal to him, both personally and as part of his positive stories about the black communities in the USA. After another – longer – version of A Blue Mural From Two Perspectives Duke finished the session with an abortive attempt of Billy Strayhorn's My Little Brown Book. On the tape he is heard saying that he didn't remember the tune. He ended it almost before it was started, and it is not included here. The late Sjeff Hoefsmit wrote about the session when he heard it back in 1994: "It is difficult to understand why these magnificent recordings never have been issued".

Well, here they are at last – for all to enjoy!

Bonus tracks (17 - 20):

On November 7th 1969 Duke Ellington and his orchestra played two concerts in Rotterdam, in the famous De Doelen concert hall. The second concert of the evening was prolonged, as the public wouldn't let Ellington go. So while the rest of the bandmembers left the stage, a quartet with Duke, Wild Bill Davis, bassist Victor Gaskin and drummer Rufus Jones stayed, and played four more numbers, much to the delight of the sold-out house. You can hear the whole band concert on Storyville CD 101 8440, and here Storyville offers the "afterparty" music by the quartet.

Ellington's Black Swan was premiered a few days before at the Copenhagen concert, and this is the second known performance of the piece, which was often played as an encore through the following years. Duke never made a big band arrangement of the tune.

The Lake that follows is a genuine first public performance of this gorgeous tune, which became the lyrical centerpiece of the ballet suite The River, taken at a slower tempo. You can hear Duke's solo piano version on Storyville CD 101 8399 "The Piano Player". At the Rotterdam concert he shares honours with Wild Bill Davis, who takes the second chorus.

Satin Doll and Just Squeeze Me from Ellington's vintage repertoire were often used as encores. Satin Doll is all Wild Bill Davis, with Duke doing his finger-snapping routine, and his "love you madly" in many languages, while Just Squeeze Me (AKA Subtle Slough) is given a full swinging treatment by the quartet, including a delightful duet between Duke and Wild Bill.

Bjarne Busk



Produced for CD: **Bjarne Busk**
Engineer: **Jørgen Vad, Vad Lyd**
Liner notes: **Bjarne Busk**
Photos: **Jan Persson**
Layout: **Finn Nygaard.com**

www.storyvillerecords.com

DUKE ELLINGTON AN INTIMATE PIANO SESSION

Recorded New York, August 25, 1972
Bonus tracks:
Recorded in Rotterdam, November 7, 1969
Licensed from Stichting NTR, Hilversum,
The Netherland

DUKE ELLINGTON

AN INTIMATE PIANO SESSION

01. THE ANTICIPATION (D. ELLINGTON) 3:16
02. LE SUCRIER VELOURS *1 (D. ELLINGTON) 4:55
03. LOTUS BLOSSOM *1 (B. STRAYHORN) 3:46
04. A BLUE MURAL FROM TWO PERSPECTIVES *1 (D. ELLINGTON – B. STRAYHORN) 1:13
05. I'M AFRAID (OF LOVING YOU TOO MUCH) (D. ELLINGTON – D. GEORGE) 3:04
06. I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT YOU (D. ELLINGTON – B. RUSSELL) 4:01
07. LOCO MADI (D. ELLINGTON) 0:52
08. LOTUS BLOSSOM *2 (B. STRAYHORN) 2:08
09. NEW WORLD A-COMIN' (D. ELLINGTON) 9:24
10. LE SUCRIER VELOURS *2 (D. ELLINGTON) 2:42
11. MELANCHOLIA (D. ELLINGTON) 4:33
12. SINGLE PETAL OF A ROSE (D. ELLINGTON) 2:45
13. THE BLUES AIN'T (D. ELLINGTON) 4:45
14. COME SUNDAY (D. ELLINGTON) 4:56
15. MY MOTHER, MY FATHER AND LOVE (D. ELLINGTON) 4:46
16. A BLUE MURAL FROM TWO PERSPECTIVES *2 (D. ELLINGTON – B. STRAYHORN) 1:56
17. BLACK SWAN (D. ELLINGTON) **1:56
18. THE LAKE (D. ELLINGTON) **4:07
19. SATIN DOLL (D. ELLINGTON – B. STRAYHORN – J. MERCER) **2:27
20. JUST SQUEEZE ME (D. ELLINGTON – L. GAINES) **5:47

Recorded New York, August 25, 1972

Recorded in Rotterdam, November 7, 1969 **

Licensed from Stichting NTR, Hilversum, The Netherland **



DUKE ELLINGTON AN INTIMATE PIANO SESSION



01. THE ANTICIPATION 3:16
02. LE SUCRIER VELOURS *1 · 4:55
03. LOTUS BLOSSOM *1 · 3:46
04. A BLUE MURAL FROM TWO PERSPECTIVES *1 · 1:13
05. I'M AFRAID (OF LOVING YOU TOO MUCH) 3:04
06. I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT YOU 4:01
07. LOCO MADI 0:52
08. LOTUS BLOSSOM *2 · 2:08
09. NEW WORLD A-COMIN' 9:24
10. LE SUCRIER VELOURS *2 · 2:42
11. MELANCHOLIA 4:33
12. SINGLE PETAL OF A ROSE 2:45
13. THE BLUES AIN'T 4:45
14. COME SUNDAY 4:56
15. MY MOTHER, MY FATHER AND LOVE 4:46
16. A BLUE MURAL FROM TWO PERSPECTIVES *2 · 1:56
17. BLACK SWAN **1:56
18. THE LAKE **4:07
19. SATIN DOLL **2:27
20. JUST SQUEEZE ME **5:47

Recorded New York, August 25, 1972

Recorded in Rotterdam, November 7, 1969 **

Produced for CD: Bjarne Busk · Engineer: Jørgen Vad, Vad Lyd

C P 2047, STORYVILLE RECORDS Made in EU

STORYVILLE
STORYVILLERECORDS.COM