

DUKE ELLINGTON

Isfahan



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STEREO
33 1/3 RPM
08-022725-1

1

BIEM-STEMRA
BLM 52031

ISFAHAN

1. SATIN DOLL (3:47) (Ellington, Strayhorn & Mercer) Campbell Connolly
2. ISFAHAN (4:18) (Ellington) United Artists
3. DIMINUENDO AND CRESCENDO IN BLUE (10:17) (Ellington) Mecalico

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An M. F. Production

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STEREO
33 1/3 RPM
08-022725-2

2

BIEM-STEMRA
BLM 52031

ISFAHAN

1. JEEP'S BLUES (4:05) (Ellington & Hodges) Mills Music
2. PYRAMID (3:39) (Ellington & Tizol) Mecalico
3. LA PLUS BELLE AFRICAINE (10:43) (Ellington) United Artists

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BLM5201

STEREO

SIDE ONE

1. SATIN DOLL (c)
Ellington, Strayhorn, Mercer (3,47)
2. ISFAHAN (d)
Ellington, Strayhorn (4,18)
3. DIMINUENDO AND CRESCENDO
IN BLUE (a)

SIDE TWO

1. JEEP'S BLUES (a)
Ellington, Hodges (4,05)
2. PYRAMID (c)
Ellington, Tizol (3,39)
3. LA PLUS BELLE AFRICAINE (e)
Ellington (10,43)

Programme selected by
Mercer Ellington, Stanley Dance
Production Supervisor: Jack Quinn
Engineer Supervisor: Bernard Fox
Sleeve Painting: LeRoy Neiman
Sleeve Layout: Malcolm Walker

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Satin Doll was composed in 1953 and gradually grew to become one of Ellington's most famous numbers. Now that it is so familiar, it seems strange that its climb to popularity was slow, but this was by no means the first time an Ellington tune required repeated performance before it was accepted by the masses. Original in conception and voicing, it eventually became a showcase for the band's bassist, in this case Jimmy Woode.

Isfahan, Ellington said, "is a place where everything is poetry." The number it inspired, after the visit to Iran in 1963, is among the most beautiful vehicles he and Strayhorn ever wrote for the band's most poetic soloist—Johnny Hodges. And great as Hodges was, the backgrounds they gave him invariably enhanced his work, as he always readily acknowledged.

When *Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue* first appeared in two parts on a 78 r.p.m. in 1957, what surprised Ellington's followers was that it depended almost entirely on the ensemble and sections, the brilliant soloists for once taking second place. However, Ellington apparently felt a need for an intermediate development between the two parts, and after various experiments came up with a long, linking solo (twenty-seven choruses) by Paul Gonsalves as performed at the 1956 Newport Jazz Festival. The solo (unfortunately off-mike on the Newport recording) was played with and over a driving beat from the rhythm section. It intoxicated the crowd and resulted in probably the greatest triumph ever at Newport or any other jazz festival. Ellington was on the cover of *TIME* soon afterwards and the band's fortune took an upward turn immediately. Gonsalves, who had to play replicas of this solo for the rest of his life, is heard here in top form two years later.

The 1956 performance of *Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue* is one of the many triumphs of the blues in the history of jazz. After all the complicated, contrived, mechanical and harebrained novelties have been heard and rejected, the blues have a way of coming on the scene almost casually and seizing the audience. *Jeep's Blues* was first recorded by a small group in 1938, and it was soon crying out from every Harlem juke-box. Because of his surpassing mastery of ballads and "mood" pieces, many people forgot that Johnny Hodges was also one of the greatest blues players. No one was in any doubt of it, however, in 1938, and this version, made twenty years later, shows that he never lost the ability to tell his blues story with complete authority.

Pyramid is another result of Ellington's collaboration with Juan Tizol, this time in 1938. Although it never attained the popularity of *Caravan*, its distinctive character ensured renewed performance from time to time. This interpretation was recorded in 1963 and features Lawrence Brown, Cootie Williams and Harry Carney.

In 1966 Ellington went to Africa for the first time, "after writing African music," as he said, "for thirty-five years!" *La Plus Belle Africaine* was inspired by the trip and finally evolved into a thoroughly worthy showcase for Harry Carney and the bass player. In this early version the work is full of delightful surprises, intriguing solos and recurring ensemble chants. Besides Ellington, the individuals variously in the foreground are John Lamb (bass), Rufus Jones (drums), Harry Carney (baritone saxophone) and Jimmy Hamilton (clarinet).

Stanley Dance

BLACK LION RECORDS ARE PRODUCED BY PHONOOCO, 16 CASTLENAU LONDON SW13, ENGLAND
(Send large stamped envelope for free catalogue)

(a) Clark Terry, Harold Baker, Cat Anderson, Ray Nance (trumpets); Quentin Jackson, Britt Woodman (trombones); John Sanders (valve trombone); Russell Procope (alto, clarinet); Johnny Hodges (alto); Paul Gonsalves (tenor); Jimmy Hamilton (clarinet, tenor); Harry Carney (baritone, clarinet, bass clarinet); Duke Ellington (piano); Jimmy Woode (bass); Sam Woodyard (drums).
Sweden, circa 6 November 1958.

(b) as (a) but Fats Ford (trumpet), Booty Wood (trombone) and Jimmy Johnson (drums) for Baker, Sanders and Woodyard.
Sweden, circa 26 September 1958.

(c) Cat Anderson, Roy Burrows, Cootie Williams, Ray Nance (trumpets); Lawrence Brown, Buster Cooper (trombones); Chuck Connors (bass trombone); reads as (a); Duke Ellington (piano); Ernie Shepard (bass); Sam Woodyard (drums).
Sweden circa 6 February 1963

(d) as (c) but Rolf Ericson (trumpet) for Roy Burrows.
Sweden, circa 1 March 1964.

(e) Cootie Williams, Cat Anderson, Herbie Jones, Mercer Ellington (trumpets); trombones as (c); reads as (a); Duke Ellington (piano); John Lamb (bass); Sam Woodyard (drums).
Copenhagen, 6 February 1966.