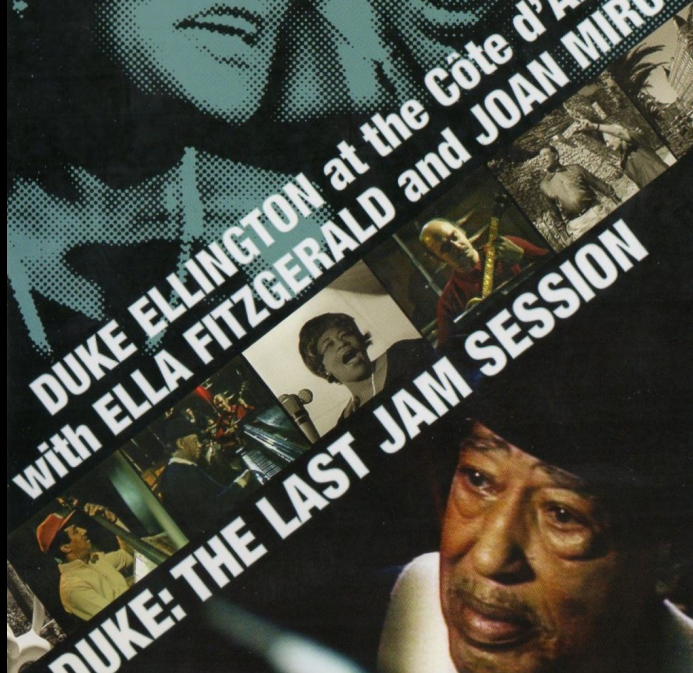




NORMAN GRANZ PRESENTS



DUKE ELLINGTON at the Côte d'Azur  
with ELLA FITZGERALD and JOAN MIRO



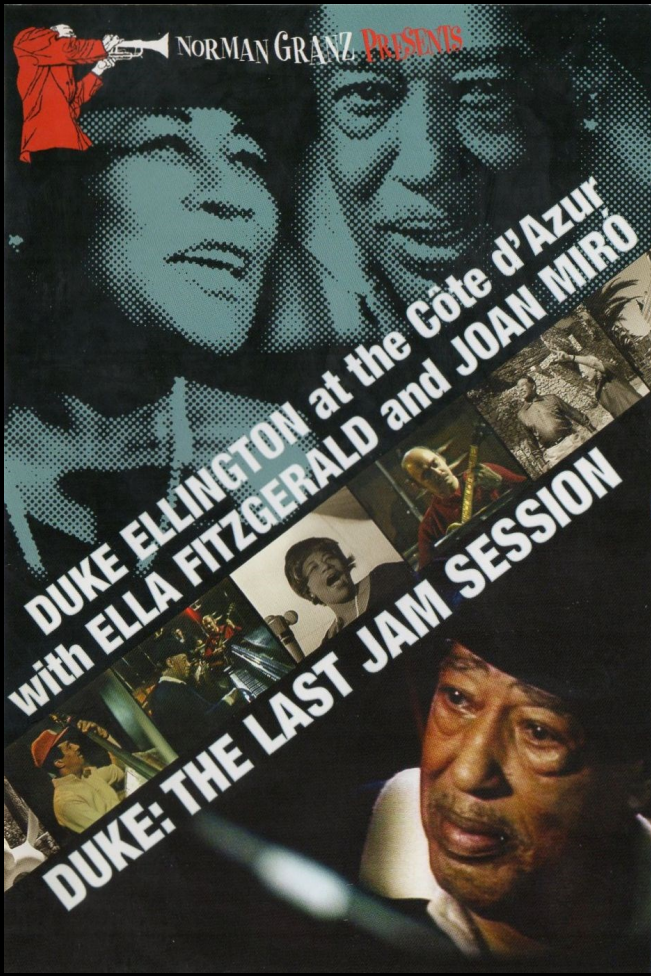
DUKE: THE LAST JAM SESSION





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NOTES BY PRODUCER: JACQUES MUYAL  
November 2007

## DUKE ELLINGTON at the Côte d'Azur with ELLA FITZGERALD and JOAN MIRÓ

This can be considered as the third film that Norman Granz directed for the purpose of featuring two giants in the history of Jazz : Duke and Ella.

I once attempted to ask Norman which of Ella's Songbooks that he produced was his favourite (what a question since all of them are Masterpieces!). Well, the answer was: The Duke Ellington Songbook. The answer was obviously so evident knowing what Duke had written (and continued to write to the end of his life).

The studio dates of the Duke Ellington Songbook by Ella, had to be followed someday by live performances. This happened in 1966 with a series of concerts featuring Duke and his band with Ella, at their peak of their careers. Several concerts took place in Paris in February (recorded by the radio station E1) and it was decided to immortalise this unique encounter on film.

This took place at the Jazz Festival in Antibes-Juan Les Pins which agreed for the purpose of filming for the same programme to be performed on two different dates (July 26 and 29) in order to provide as much material as possible for the final film. The open-air setting of the Pinède Gould and the glamour of the French Riviera was particularly suitable for the flamboyance of Duke!

The rehearsals were also filmed, and you can see the relationships between Duke and his musicians and the collaboration between Duke and Norman Granz.

Norman was not only one of the most important personalities in Jazz, but was also a great art specialist, the crew moved on to film at the fabulous Maeght Foundation at St Paul de Vence.

That year, the artist in residence was Joan Miró, and here we see Duke and Miró walking around the gardens, passing by the sculptures of Giacometti, the mobiles of Calder as well as Miró's own sculptures.

By magic a little jam session takes place (Duke, John Lamb & Sam Woodyard). Duke improvises a tune while Miró checks out one of his sculptures to make sure that his art is as good as Duke's!

The same tune is taken by the band some hours later, an example of improvisation developing into a big band arrangement. In comes Ella, Duke's band backing her with the fantastic Jimmy Jones at the piano.

Splendid as ever she performs "Something To Live For" and the happiest "So Danço Samba" and yet she was informed only hours before the concert that her sister had passed away... but the Lady of Song could not deliver anything else than a masterpiece.

The film was shot in 16 mm black and white format, and intended to be shown in theatres, which never happened. The version you have here has been remastered for release on DVD and is a great moment of Jazz history.

The concerts were released first in 1967 on a double LP (Ella & Duke At the Côte d'Azur) and on one single LP (Elling's Soul Call ), then in 1998 Verve released an 8 CD box set featuring the complete concerts.

## DUKE: THE LAST JAM SESSION

The second DVD is a previously unreleased video of the last Jam session recorded by Duke Ellington. A very rare date featuring a small group of stars from Norman Granz Pablo label including Joe Pass, Ray Brown and Louie Bellson.

The video crew was called in the very last moment which shows in the footage but what was saved for this program has so much value, that one quickly forgets the marginal video quality.

This is a gem for Jazz lovers: the intimacy between the musicians, the admiration for Duke, the ambiance created by Norman Granz with his musicians during the recording, the fact that an audience was present and finally a little glance to the recording engineer in his booth, the famous, for so many sessions : Val Valentin.

Duke was happy about this session (released on LP by Pablo under the title of Duke Big 4) and about this video. During his last days at the hospital, he would run the video for the nurses.

This is the first time the programme has been released on DVD.



CLAUDE CARRIÈRE  
Paris - May 1998 & October 2006

## DUKE ELLINGTON at the Côte d'Azur with ELLA FITZGERALD and JOAN MIRÓ

In 1966, when I was in my twenties, I came with my family to Juan-les-Pins. I brought my wife, my young son and our little tent. We camped near the festival grounds, as we didn't have much money. I was already a big fan of Duke Ellington and His Orchestra. But this



visit of theirs was special; It was the bands first time in this part of the south of France, its first time on the Côte d'Azur.

There was a festive air to the proceedings; the atmosphere was so special. The weather was great, the people were great, the girls were beautiful, the booze was great and the food was great.

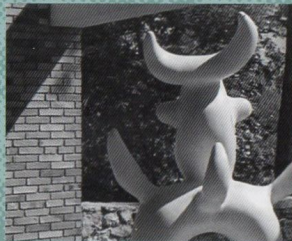
I felt so privileged to be there. This was the first time that I had got to see the band in rehearsal – I was invited to one. So I saw the musicians around during the day and then I saw them performing Under the Stars. I was able to spend some time with them, in and out of rehearsal over the four days that they were in town. And I was

able to spend my money – all of it – to see three of their concerts at night.

I had the wonderful feeling at that first night's concert that the band wouldn't be leaving the next day, that they would be around and part of the festival. I could see

them again and again. This was especially important to us, as we hadn't seen the Ellington band much in France in previous years (I had first seen the band in France in 1958, but they had not been back every year).

And staying in Juan-les-Pins for four days was good for the musicians. Although most of them were only in their fifties, I have to admit they seemed tired. When I looked at their itinerary, I realised that they had a gruelling schedule in the States – every day another city – then they came to France, and then returned



to the States to continue touring.

Paul Gonsalves actually slept on the bandstand when he wasn't playing. When it was his turn to solo, he played like hell. Sam Woodyard, too, was tired – although I learned later that he was not in great condition. But we loved the

way he swung the band. (When the band had come the previous February, there were two drummers, Elvin Jones and Skeets Marsh. Ellington seemed to have fun with Elvin but some sidemen didn't like it at all. Ellington called Woodyard in Boston and asked him to rejoin the band, and that was a good thing for us as we got to see the best drummer for the Ellington band at Juan-les-Pins).



At the rehearsal I remember the band-members funny hats – Johnny Hodges was wearing a pink cap. I watched him sign his name on a girl – right on her flesh, next to her bikini. I heard that Gonsalves fell asleep on the beach after a concert, and that when he woke in the morning he was surrounded by these bikini-clad



girls. (I also heard that some band-members didn't speak to each other on this tour, but Woodyard assured me that the band was like Sherwood Forest).

It was so different from any other band. They didn't always play together. This wasn't Ellington's best trumpet

section and Lawrence Brown didn't have his best chops.

Maybe some people thought that the band didn't care. But you don't have to smile in order to enjoy what you are doing or be a professional. These

guys were pros, and they didn't have to show emotion. Hodges never looked like he cared, even in old firms from the Thirties. The proof that he cared is that he was able to create such wonder. Hearing Hodges play just one



note under the stars at Juan-les-Pins was like a rain of diamonds. Russell Procope told me, "Maybe you have the impression that I play the same solo on The Mooche night after night. But every day I change just a phrase, just a little bit. Its always fresh for me. I'm not tired of playing such beautiful music especially in such a beautiful setting."

This was my first time hearing in concert West Indian Pancake, The Trip, La Plus Belle Africaine and The Old Circus Train, all of which I saw the band rehearse. The Matador (El Viti) was nearly new and Half The Fun and Madness in Great Ones were not usually played in concert. And Hodges didn't play The Star-Crossed Lovers

that often. This version was slower, more majestic than ever. I remember that there was a new arrangement of Chelsea Bridge that Billy Strayhorn had done, and that the band was really playing for him. Strayhorn was touring the world at



this time, saying goodbye to everyone. His condition was poor, he was thin; I could see the scarf that he wore, where he had had cancer surgery. He sat with his companion, Aaron Bridgers. But poor Billy died less than a year later.

Ellington played piano like a kid. He had such enthusiasm, I didn't care if it was the thousandth version of Cotton Tail or Take the "A" Train. It didn't matter. He made me feel that these versions were mine. And when he played those medleys, Black and Tan Fantasy, Creole Love Call, The Mooche, they sounded so fresh. I loved watching Ellington walking around at the festival. He was such a generous personality. I loved the way he strolled on the bandstand and stood in front of his band. He was so gracious and I loved his speeches. He was so funny with his "We love you madly" routine.

The Juan-les-Pins audiences weren't just jazz specialists. Some of the spectators had never heard this kind of music and were so proud to hear and see stars like these in their home town.

It was unfortunate that the piano wasn't a great one. The sound wasn't really good, especially for those of us who didn't have a lot of money. The best seats, as at all of these festivals, were reserved for the millionaires, those with connections, and local officials.

Some of these people didn't have any interest in the music. And for many of the critics coming from Paris, the new music was the thing. They came to see other groups – some of them groundbreaking ones. I understood that. Seeing these tired-looking musicians of Ellingtons, I can understand that they wouldn't be so



excited. These critics sat through the orchestra performances looking at their watches, pencilling in their reviews. Even such a gentleman as Harry Carney held no interest for them.

It was a strange time; young people, too, were into the new, free-music movement and, for them, Ellington was too old.

But now young people ask me what it was like to have seen all of those legends in the flesh. I tell them that I have enjoyed other bands like Count Basie's and Woody Herman's. The music was much clearer with them. But the sound of Ellington's band, with all of these individuals... nothing could match it.

I was like a two-headed cat in a fish market, eyeing all of those legends. I was watching and hearing history. Nothing can approach the feeling that you have lived something out of the ordinary – that you have seen artists beyond category. You know that such a thing will never happen again.

## DUKE: THE LAST JAM SESSION

This DVD objectively shows the un-staged filming of the January 8th, 1973 recording of one of Duke Ellington's last big records Duke Big Four, produced by Norman Granz for his label Pablo. Here, Duke finds himself in a very unusual situation, playing in a quartet with a Guitar where the only member regarded as an "ellingtonian" was Louie Bellson. Louie was one of his percussionists (one of his favourites he later admitted) between 1951 and 1952 and then again in 1965. Notably he also only collaborated once with the double bass player Ray Brown, at the time of the writing of the album "This One s For Blanton", one month previously, on December 5, 1972.



As for guitarist Joe Pass, it would seem that their paths first crossed on January 8 at a screening in a Los Angeles studio. On this day, Duke arrived from Las Vegas to put the finishing touches to a piano solo for a television show during which he received a

"Golden Award" for his work, in the company of a particular Liza Minelli and Sonny and Cher... Two days before, on the 5th, he had appeared on the Michael Parkinson show for the BBC in London. On the 3rd and 4th of January, he had been invited to appear on two television shows for the ORTF, in Paris, in the company of Stéphane Grappelli and Michel Legrand. He had left his orchestra in New York

on January 1st. Some of its members including Cootie Williams, Harry Carney and Paul Gonsalves, were to join up with him for the recording of a television show conceived in his honour by Quincy Jones called "We Love You Madly". Filmed on January 10th, in the Schubert Theatre, Los Angeles, Duke appeared there

briefly, obviously tired and suffering with flu. He was admitted into St Vincents Hospital the following day where the doctors diagnosed him with extreme exhaustion. Ellington didn't rejoin his orchestra until January 28th in Cincinnati.

Taking this in mind, on this day, January 8th, we find the Seventy plus year old pianist (on April 29th he would reach his 74th birthday) in good form.

With the legendary bags under his eyes, a funny round hat on his head, he was enjoying himself and taking great excitement in the creation of the music. There was no sign of weariness or impatience in him. Within the studio, the four musicians are very close to each other, without screens, without headphones, in the ideal situation to play really well together. One could see a smiling relaxation, a united concentration and a large amount of mutual respect.

After tuning the guitar, Ellington starts to play a bit of a new piece, which one discovers later to be named The Brotherhood from the Third Concert Of Sacred Music. This first piece does not appear to be suitable for recording immediately and after a first appearance of Norman Granz, who was present throughout the session (one can also see the moustache of Stanley Dance simply as a spectator), the musicians throw themselves into Just Squeeze Me, a tune that Ellington had created in 1943 starting from Subtle Slough by Rex Stewart.



After amusingly listening to the playback, Duke outlines some measures to the Stride Piano. The Blues, also known as Carnegie Blues, a sequel to Black, Brown and Beige composed and created in 1943, is quickly learned and digested by Joe Pass, and nailed with ease.

In the same way, after a quick reminder of The Hawk Talks, a tune by Louie Bellson, part of the repertory of the ducal orchestra since 1951, he records it without further ceremony, in a way so spontaneous that his part is hardly prepared and we can even see Ray Brown dictating, one by one, the chords from the bridge to the guitarist!

And then the premier of Prelude to a Kiss, a tune written by Ellington in 1938. It is undoubtedly the highlight of the day where one

discovered a new catch. The version published on this disc will be recorded after a first outline of CottonTail. A new end will be tried for Prelude but not kept. Then two swift versions of Cotton Tail (Ellington 1940), the second later



cut, then Everything But You (Ellington 1945) and finally Love You Madly (Ellington 1950) with a last bridge that Duke forgets to arrange... ..but the take is kept as is. As if the other musicians were wanted elsewhere, Duke and Ray Brown recreate for their own pleasure their Fragmented Suite for Piano and Bass which they had invented together and entrusted to the microphones of the same producer one month before...

Its all over, leaving you wanting more, moved and filled, with the feeling of having caught a fleeting glimpse of true greatness. With also the impression of having uncovered the true depth of talent of these artists, who, with each second, prove they have a masterly imagination and ability to listen and improvise in response to each other.

## DISC 1

### DUKE ELLINGTON AT THE CÔTE DAZUR WITH ELLA FITZGERALD AND JOAN MIRÓ

#### DUKE ELLINGTON BAND:

1. The Opener  
*(Ellington)*
2. Such Sweet Thunder  
*(Ellington/Strayhorn)*
3. Medley:  
Black And Tan Fantasy  
*(Ellington/Wesley/Miley)*
- Creole Love Call  
*(Ellington)*
- The Mooche  
*(Ellington)*

#### DUKE ELLINGTON TRIO:

4. Kinda Dukish  
*(Ellington)*
5. The Shepherd  
*(Ellington)*

#### DUKE ELLINGTON BAND:

6. The Old Circus Train Turn-Around Blues  
*(Ellington)*
7. La Plus Belle Africaine  
*(Ellington)*
8. Satin Doll  
*(Ellington/Strayhorn)*
9. Something To Live For  
*(Strayhorn)*
10. Jazz Samba  
*(Jobin/Moraes/Gimbel)*
11. Things Aint What They Used To Be  
*(Mercer Ellington)*

#### DUKE ELLINGTON BAND:

Duke Ellington, Cootie Williams, Cat Anderson, Mercer Ellington, Herbie Jones, Lawrence Brown, Buster Cooper, Chuck Connors, Paul Gonsalves, Jimmy Hamilton, Jonny Hodges, Russel Procope, Harry Carney, John Lamb, Sam Woodyard, Jimmy Jones, Jimmy Hughardt, Grady Tate & Ella Fitzgerald.

## DISC 2

### DUKE: THE LAST JAM SESSION

1. Opening of session
2. The Brotherhood  
*(Ellington)*
3. Just Squeeze Me  
*(Ellington/Gaines)*
4. Carnegie Blues  
*(Ellington)*
5. The Hawk Talks  
*(Bellson)*

6. Prelude To A Kiss  
*(Gordon/Mills/Ellington)*
7. Cotton Tail  
*(Ellington)*
8. Everything But You  
*(Ellington/George/James)*
9. Love You Madly  
*(Ellington)*
10. Fragmented Suite  
for Piano and Bass  
*(Ellington/Brown)*







This DVD set couples two of the most important collaborations in Jazz: Duke Ellington and Ella Fitzgerald live in the South of France in the third film by Norman Granz and the previously unreleased video recording of Duke Ellington with Joe Pass, Ray Brown and Louie Bellson in one of his last performances. It showcases these Jazz greats at their very best, be it singing, performing as a Big Band or jamming as a small group and is the perfect addition for the collection of any Jazz lover. As a bonus there is the last interview with master bass player Ray Brown.

**DISC 1**

**DUKE ELLINGTON AT THE CÔTE D'AZUR WITH ELLA FITZGERALD AND JOAN MIRÓ**

DUKE ELLINGTON BAND:

1. The Opener
2. Such Sweet Thunder
3. Medley: Black And Tan Fantasy/Creole Love Call/The Mooche

DUKE ELLINGTON TRIO:

4. Kinda Dukish
5. The Shepherd

DUKE ELLINGTON BAND:

6. The Old Circus Train Turn-Around Blues
7. La Plus Belle Africaine
8. Satin Doll
9. Something To Live For
10. Jazz Samba
11. Things Ain't What They Used To Be

**BONUS FEATURES**

Nat Hentoff presents Duke & Ella  
Photo gallery  
Portraits by David Stone Martin

**DISC 2**

**DUKE: THE LAST JAM SESSION**

1. The Brotherhood
2. Just Squeeze Me
3. Carnegie Blues
4. The Hawk Talks
5. Prelude To A Kiss
6. Cotton Tail
7. Everything But You
8. Love You Madly
9. Fragmented Suite for Piano & Bass

**BONUS FEATURES**

Interview with Ray Brown

Interview with Nat Hentoff filmed in New York, 17/06/2004 at the Village Voice  
Village Voice coordinator: Jessica Bellucci  
Production coordinators: Eagle UK - Claire Higgins & Mark Fossat  
Executive Producers for Eagle Rock Entertainment: Terry Shand & Geoff Kempin  
Producer: Jacques Maya

This work is dedicated to my friends Norman Granz and Frank Tashert - Jacques Maya  
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Running time: Disc 1: 74 mins approx. Disc 2: 106 mins approx.

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Packaging design by Niklas Aronbyrd