

FANTASY 6032

DUKE ELLINGTON
AND HIS ORCHESTRA
LATIN AMERICAN SUITE





Fantasy



6032
6.032 A
FACE A

LATIN AMERICAN SUITE
DUKE ELLINGTON

1. OCLUPACA (D. Ellington) 4'20
2. CHICO CUADRADINO (D. Ellington - M. Ellington) 5'00
3. EQUÉ (D. Ellington) 3'30
4. TINA (D. Ellington) 4'34

Distribution MUSIDISC-EUROPE

all rights of the manufacturer and of the owner of the recorded work reserved unauthorized public performance broadcasting and copying of this record prohibited - made in France



Fantasy



6032
6.032 B
FACE B

LATIN AMERICAN SUITE
DUKE ELLINGTON

1. THE SLEEPING LADY AND THE GIANT WHO WATCHES OVER HER - 7'25
2. LATIN AMERICAN SUNSHINE - 6'52
3. BRASILLIANCE - 5'06

(All compositions written by D. Ellington)

Distribution MUSIDISC-EUROPE

all rights of the manufacturer and of the owner of the recorded work reserved unauthorized public performance broadcasting and copying of this record prohibited - made in France

Side One

1. Oclupaca 4:20
2. Chico Cuadrado 5:00
- (D. Ellington, M. Ellington)
3. Equé 3:30
4. Tina 4:34 (D. Ellington)

Side Two

1. The Sleeping Lady and the Giant Who Watches Over Her 7:25
2. Latin American Sunshine 6:52
3. Brasilliance 5:06

All selections Tempo Music ASCAP
All compositions written by Duke Ellington except as noted.

Produced by Mr. Ellington

Art direction and photography by Tony Lane

When Duke Ellington and his musicians left New York for Rio de Janeiro on the first day of September, 1968, it was—rather surprisingly for such world-travelers—their first excursion to Latin America. "I'm giving up a lot of my virginity on this trip," Ellington observed as the Aerolíneas Argentinas jet headed south. "I've never been to South America or below the equator before."

They played in Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and Mexico, and always they were welcomed in packed houses with an enthusiasm that moved the most experienced and blasé among them. At receptions in the different U.S. embassies, these unofficial ambassadors met and discussed affairs of the day with members of the diplomatic corps as though such occasions were routine to them. The main responsibility, however, fell on Ellington himself, his wit, charm and composure everywhere making a big impression. In addition to the concerts and the more-or-less obligatory social affairs attended by his men, he not only had to make television and radio appearances, but also field questions of all kinds at extensive press receptions in each new city visited. He did this with unflinching skill and tact, although often he was very short of sleep because of the infrequent air services between South American cities (infrequent, that is, as compared with what is normal in his own country and Europe). His patience, too, seemed inexhaustible, and everyone who wanted an autograph received one, no matter how much time it took. "I can't let these people down," he said once, refusing to escape by a back door from a theatre besieged by admirers. The affection between artist and audience reached a peak in Buenos Aires where, after his last performance, people waited crying, trying to touch him, and in many cases thrusting gifts upon him that did not even bear their names.

"The generosity and enthusiasm of the audiences," he said on leaving, "were altogether the inspiration of a lifetime—a virtual summit in my career. Everything and everyone has been so completely and warmly attuned that I am truly overwhelmed, and at a loss to express

my appreciation. Perhaps I can do so at a later date, in music."

The music in this album is the expression of that appreciation, and much of it was actually written while the tour was in progress. He had agreed to present a new work, which he had tentatively titled *Mexican Anticipation*, in Mexico City on September 28th, and he was writing this and trying out sections of it during the band's performances en route. The warmth of the welcome in South America, however, soon caused him to decide that the Mexican sections would have to become part of a larger *Latin American Suite*.

There were occasional opportunities for him to hear authentic native music, as in Sao Paulo, where an extremely talented group of folk musicians was specially gathered together in a small club for his entertainment. Moreover, authorities of regional music brought him books and records to supplement their discussions with him. But essentially *The Latin American Suite* is not an attempt to re-interpret the musical forms indigenous to the countries he visited; it reproduces musically the impressions made upon him by those countries and their people. Thus the rhythmic underlay is always oriented in a Latin American direction, but it is achieved by his regular rhythm section, without the addition of the congas, bongos and timbales most composer-arrangers would have felt necessary.

A striking difference between this and his other suites is in the much greater emphasis on the ensemble and the piano player's role. For once, most of the other soloists take second place. In this, perhaps, and in the unison voicing, Ellington echoes practices of those Latin American bands that were influenced in their instrumental devices by the big U.S. bands.

The suite opens with *Oclupaca*, a title that is a typical Ellington inversion. If you have ever been there, you will know that it is a delightful place for a vacation. The band spent a very relaxed day on its beaches, and played for an equally relaxed dance, at which Ava Gardner made a radiant appearance. The happiness of that occasion, even an impression of sunlit good health, are present in a performance that yet has an exotic, yearning undercurrent, as though the weathered inhabitants of the red hills beyond were remembered, too. Fittingly, the band's champion swimmer is given the major solo responsibility, and Paul Gonsalves makes the most of it in a manner that may bring back fond memories of Ben Webster on *Congo Brava*.

Chico Cuadrado portrays "a little Spanish square doing his thang!" Humorous and animated, it has a boisterous trombone solo by Buster Cooper and another sterling contribution from Gonsalves. Note the audible pres-

ence of the late Johnny Hodges in the reed section, and the handclapping of the maestro in the background. The inspiration was derived from another of those occasions when the band played for dancers.

Equé has to do with Ellington's first crossing of the Equator, an event that would stir the imagination even without the presentation of a commemorative document in elegant, courtly Spanish. Johnny Hodges and Paul Gonsalves share solo honors with the piano player.

Tina is an affectionate diminutive for Argentina, whose people reacted so emotionally everywhere. Ellington noticed that the Brazilian response was stronger to the more rhythmic numbers, whereas the Argentinians showed more appreciation of his music's melodic qualities. Played only by the rhythm section, here including two bassists, *Tina* has a pretty, fragrant theme, and appropriate references to the tango, a dance still popular in Argentina.

The Sleeping Lady and the Giant Who Watches Over Her are the two snow-capped mountains whose presence is always felt in Mexico City. Although it is the closest to the U.S., Mexico is yet in many respects one of the most "foreign" of the Latin American countries, and these brooding mountains are an unforgettable part of its singular landscape. Somehow, Ellington the composer has managed to convey, along with their serenity, something of the extraordinarily colorful history they have witnessed.

Latin American Sunshine is a catchy piece that grew on tour from a rhythmic work-out by piano and bass to an extremely exhilarating statement by the whole band. The reads always contrived to make their entry with a special lift. Note the invaluable role of Harry Carney's baritone saxophone in the counter-melody and Lawrence Brown's jaunty interpolation. The sunshine in the title should not, of course, be taken too literally, for it embraces the warm smiles and warm hearts encountered throughout Latin America.

Brasilliance, surging with life and rhythmic power, can be regarded as a tribute to the huge nation to the south. A long way from the cool sophistication of the samba, it salutes both the industrial energy of Sao Paulo and the frontier spirit of those who are opening up the vast interior. Paul Gonsalves, again in marvelous form, is in his element, as he was in Brazil, where his knowledge of Portuguese made him the band's official interpreter.

Ellington's tremendous resources in thematic and orchestral invention are once again revealed in *The Latin American Suite*. Certainly, no one associated with jazz has succeeded in blending its emotional content so felicitously with the rhythmic impulses of Latin American idioms.

—Stanley Dance

Author of The Record Guide (Doubleday)