

The Duke

LONDON

ORIGINS OF JAZZ

LONG PLAYING 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. RECORDS

AL 3551

1926

IF YOU CAN'T HOLD THE MAN YOU LOVE
YOU'VE GOT THOSE "WANNA GO BACK AGAIN" BLUES
IT'S GONNA BE A COLD, COLD WINTER

PARLOR SOCIAL DE LUXE

CHOO-CHOO • RAINY NIGHTS

ANIMAL CRACKERS • LI'L FARINA

DUKE ELLINGTON'S Washingtonians

LONG PLAYING 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. MICROGROOVE FLEXIBLE RECORD

MADE IN ENGLAND

LONDON

ORIGINS OF JAZZ

LONG PLAYING 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. RECORD

- (a, d) Mills Music
- (b) Campbell Connolly
- (c) M.C.P.S.

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(6627100)
AL.3551
SIDE 1

THE DUKE—1926

IF YOU CAN'T HOLD THE MAN YOU LOVE (Kahal, Palm) (a)
 YOU'VE GOT THOSE "WANNA GO BACK AGAIN" BLUES
 (Tark, Hardman) (b); IT'S GONNA BE A COLD, COLD
 WINTER (Trent, Granger) (c); PARLOT SOUTAI, DE
 LOUXE (Trent, Mills, Ellington) (d)

DUKE ELLINGTON'S
WASHINGTONIANS

MADE IN ENGLAND

LONDON

ORIGINS OF JAZZ

LONG PLAYING 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ r.p.m. RECORD

- (a) I. Wright Music
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SIDE 2

THE DUKE—1926

CHOO CHOO (Ringle, Schafer, Ellington) (a); RAINY NIGHTS
 (Trent, Ellington, Lopez) (b); ANIMAL CRACKERS (Rich,
 Costello, Link) (c); L.F. FARINA (Smith, Moor) (d)

DUKE ELLINGTON'S
WASHINGTONIANS

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Side No. 1
DUKE ELLINGTON'S WASHINGTONIANS
If you can't hold the man you love (*Kahal; Fain*)
You've got those "Wanna go back again" blues
(*Tark; Hartman*)

ALBERTA PRIME with DUKE ELLINGTON
It's gonna be a cold, cold winter (*Trent; Granger*)
ALBERTA PRIME and SONNY GREER with
DUKE ELLINGTON
Parlor social de luxe (*Trent; Mills; Ellington*)

Side No. 2
DUKE ELLINGTON'S WASHINGTONIANS
Choo-choo (*Ringle; Schafer; Ellington*)
Rally nights (*Trent; Ellington; Lopez*)
Animal crackers (*Rick; Costum; Link*)
L! F! Farina (*Smith; Mier*)

The creative career of Duke Ellington, as we can trace it on gramophone records, seems to have followed a very definite pattern, roughly in four stages. Stage one, illustrated on this record, is the young man vaguely knowing what he wants to do but still without the means of doing it or a complete grasp of his own ideas. Stage two begins with the infusion of ideas from certain talented musicians, beginning with Bubber Miley and Otto Hardwicke, then the most important of all Joe Nanton, then Wellman Braud. At this stage Ellington eagerly grasps the ideas and sounds that these men have to offer, using the mute and the growl technique almost to the point of fanaticism, and with this supple material at his finger tips, creates an unforgettable and distinctive Ellington style of composition and presentation. This remarkable creative flowering roughly coincides with the beginning of 1927. The next stage is the influence of the swing period. For a while now the Ellington band is not so individual as it has been, a number of big band clichés are used and the soloists are doing more of what they like, less of what Ellington demands. Finally the complete emergence of Ellington the composer, the man who knows more about jazz as a jazz composition than anyone else, a complete grasp of big band technique and a lot of ideas to write down. From now on the Ellington band moves with the times and the question of decline or improvement is largely one to be thrashed out elsewhere among the record reviewers.

The first stage occupies our interest on this record. Here are eight examples of the earliest Ellington recordings, most of them very scarce in this country. They fill a gap in our knowledge of the Ellington band, and though they will undoubtedly disappoint as music, they are of tremendous historical interest. Their existence emphasizes a point that a number of critics have put forward, that the Ellington band, at this stage of formation, was an example of the influence of a group of musicians on a composer rather than the influence of a composer on a group of musicians. The reason for this is that Ellington, the only considerable jazz composer of the time apart from Jelly Roll Morton, was working in a vacuum, he was a pioneer. It was not until he had something concrete to work upon, in this case the remarkable talents of his musicians, that he was able to create a new kind of music.

Jazz in the first place is an American music, America's greatest single contribution to the arts; it is a music that is basically Negro, but predominantly American. As Leonard Feather points out in "The Encyclopedia of Jazz"—"in melodic and harmonic construction, the early

jazz bears considerably more resemblance to such tunes of the 1830s as *Arkansas traveler* and *Turkey in the straw* than to any known African music". Jazz is, for instance, more natural to a white American than to an Englishman because it has something in common with the rhythms of American speech and the warmth of the American character.

If we compare these early Ellington recordings with other Negro band recordings made at the same time, notably the Jelly Roll Morton bands and the King Oliver Savannah Syncopators, we can see how astonishingly unrelaxed and un-Negro the early Ellington band was, and with the corny novelty noises of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band and the New Orleans Rhythm Kings. Bubber Miley seems to have given the first guidance toward Negro jazz. Charlie Irvis of the fabulous reputation does nothing remarkable and it might reasonably be assumed that Ellington was anxious to have him replaced by Nanton whom he had heard playing elsewhere. According to Ulanov's book on Ellington, the Duke practically kidnapped Nanton or as "Tricky Sam" puts it, "he TOOK me with him". The Nanton horn was an obvious inspiration; it was in fact the basis of the Ellington sound. After this the Ellington band became rhythmical and forceful and with the addition of players like Bigard, of whom Morton justifiably remarked that the Ellington band wouldn't be anything without the New Orleans boy, it became smooth and swinging.

The first sides on this record sound like a large white band trying to emulate the blues. Fine players like Don Redman and Jimmy Harrison are obviously lost and ill at ease in this vocal-do style group. Nevertheless these sides sold fast and all the copies of this record seem to have disappeared. Apart from the Duke, Fred Guy and Sonny Greer and Otto Hardwicke none of the new sound men are present.

The two sides with "Alberta Prime" (a pseudonym for Alberta Hunter who was then under contract to a different company) emphasize the fact that Ellington was no blues pianist at that time. On both sides he starts off at a wrong tempo playing a sort of ragtime introduction which he tries to adapt in style and speed to the singers' requirements with very little success. An accompaniment like this would have come easily to James P. Johnson or any of the other Harlem pianists. Ellington says himself that the only things he liked playing or could play were his own compositions, he had no aptitude for improvising or playing by ear.

At the same session they made *Choo-choo* and *Rally nights*. There is nothing remarkable either in the solos or the ensembles; the band really wasn't ready to shine as a small group like this. But a point of interest is a typical bit of Ellington scoring creeping in near the middle of *Choo-choo*, the rest is rather chaotic and unplanned. *Animal crackers* as *L! F! Farina* was made a couple of months earlier, are by far the most successful sides here. With Bubber Miley, Charlie Johnson, Otto Hardwicke there is a slight semblance of an Ellingtonian

style, and there are some interesting solos by the main members of the group.

These are valuable and fascinating records. They provide interesting material for the study of the growth of a great American composer and the development of a new kind of music. There is no need to be over-critical musically, the historical importance of these recordings alone, plus their rarity, makes this record well worth its weight in sapphires.

DUKE ELLINGTON'S WASHINGTONIANS

If you can't hold the man you love (*Focal by Jimmy Harrison*)
(Matrix No. GEX584. Gennett 3291)
You've got those "Wanna go back again" blues (*Vocal by George Thomas*)
(Matrix No. GEX574. Gennett 3291)

Harry Cooper, Leroy Rulledge (*trumpets*); Charles Irvis, Jimmy Harrison (*trumpets*); Otto Hardwicke, Don Redman, George Thomas, Prince Robinson (*saxophones*); Duke Ellington (*piano*); Fred Guy (*guitar*); Bass Edwartz (*drum*); Sonny Greer (*drums*). Recorded New York, April 5, 1926.

"ALBERTA PRIME" (Alberta Hunter) (*Focal*) with Duke Ellington (*piano*)

It's gonna be a cold, cold winter (Matrix No. T-2001-1. Blue-Disc T1007)

Alberta Prime and Sonny Greer (*Vocal duet*) with Duke Ellington (*piano*)

Parlor social de luxe (Matrix No. T-2002-2. Blue-Disc T1007). Recorded New York, late 1926.

DUKE ELLINGTON'S WASHINGTONIANS

Choo-choo (Matrix No. T-2005-2. Blue-Disc T1012).
Rally nights (Matrix No. T-2006-2. Blue-Disc T1012).

Bubber Miley (*trumpet*); Charlie Irvis (*trumpet*); Otto Hardwicke (*alto-saxophone*); Duke Ellington (*piano*); Fred Guy (*guitar*); Sonny Greer (*drums*). Recorded New York, late 1926.

DUKE ELLINGTON'S WASHINGTONIANS

Animal crackers (Matrix No. GEX199. Gennett 3342).
L! F! Farina (Matrix No. GEX191. Gennett 3342).

Bubber Miley, Charlie Johnson (*trumpets*); Charlie Irvis (*trumpet*); Otto Hardwicke (*baritone and alto-saxophones*); Prince Robinson (*tenor-saxophone and clarinet*); Duke Ellington (*piano*); Fred Guy (*guitar*); Bass Edwartz (*drum*); Sonny Greer (*drums*). Recorded New York, June 28, 1926.

LONDON
ORIGINS OF JAZZ
LONG PLAYING 331 r.p.m. RECORD

A "Riverside" Record

produced by

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