

**JOHNNY MATHIS
IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD
MATHIS SINGS ELLINGTON**

1. OVERTURE - A MUSICAL TRIBUTE TO DUKE ELLINGTON
—B. Olson—
2. LUSH LIFE —B. Strayhorn—
3. DON'T YOU KNOW I CARE (DON'T YOU CARE I KNOW) /
—D. Ellington—M. David—
- I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT YOU —B. Russell—D. Ellington—
4. THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY
USED TO BE (Instrumental)
—T. Persons—M. Ellington—
5. IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD
—D. Ellington—M. Kurtz—
I. Mills—
6. WHAT AM I HERE FOR
—F. Laine—D. Ellington—
7. I GOT IT BAD AND
THAT AIN'T GOOD
(Instrumental)
—P. Webster—D. Ellington—
8. SOMETHING
TO LIVE FOR
—D. Ellington—B. Strayhorn—
9. SOLITUDE
—E. DeLange—D. Ellington—
I. Mills—
10. PERDIDO (Instrumental)
—J. Tizol—E. Drake—
H. Lenk—
11. PRELUDE TO A KISS
—I. Mills—I. Gordon—D. Ellington—
12. IN A MELLOW TONE
—M. Gabler—D. Ellington—
13. DON'T GET AROUND MUCH ANYMORE
—D. Ellington—B. Russell—
14. SATIN DOLL (Instrumental)
—D. Ellington—
15. COME SUNDAY
—D. Ellington—
16. DO NOTHIN' TILL YOU HEAR FROM ME
—B. Russell—D. Ellington—
17. CARAVAN (Instrumental)
—D. Ellington—I. Mills—J. Tizol—
18. DAY DREAM
—J. LaTouche—D. Ellington—B. Strayhorn—

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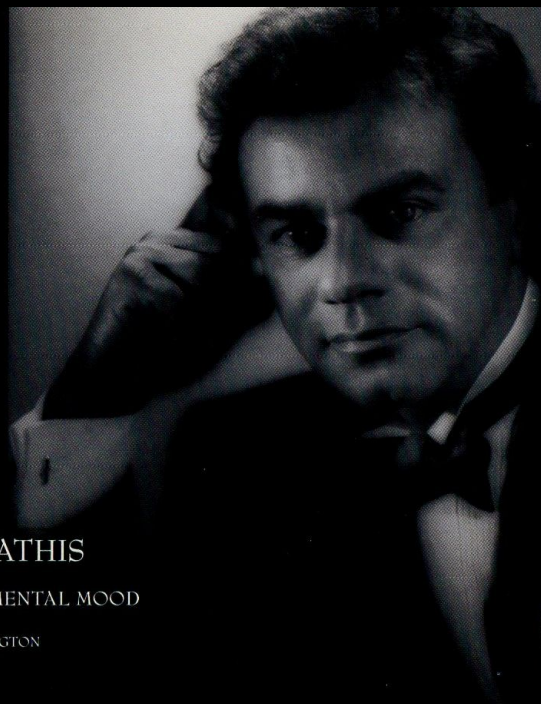
DIGITAL AUDIO

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JOHNNY MATHIS

IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD

MATHIS SINGS ELLINGTON



"Let's go back to the source. Let's go back to what I do best—good old American popular song."

Johnny Mathis speaking, making dramatically clear his intention to do something very special, indeed, with this striking new album.

"Let's go back to the music I grew up with, the music that was sung by all my idols—Sarah Vaughan, Nat "King" Cole, Lena Horne, Ella Fitzgerald."

And, for Mathis, the music that was sung best by his idols always included the stirring rhythms and the rich passions, the soaring lyricism and the indigo spirit of Duke Ellington.

But this is more than a songbook album, more than an everyday anthology of best-loved favorites. This is a Johnny Mathis collection of Duke Ellington—a chronicle filled with both familiar and less well-known songs, spiced with fragments of melody and rhythm from the entire Ellington legacy.

"I wanted," says Johnny, "to make an intimate, close, hands-on portrait of this great man and his great music. And I wanted to get it right—to keep the feeling alive in a way that was completely honest and true."

And he got it right—very right. In his quest to be true to the music, Mathis went back to another basic—live recording. Working in the rich acoustic environment of London's Petersham Church, performing with a hand-picked collection of musicians who were also dedicated to Ellington's music, Mathis abandoned the now-common practice of multi-tracking and sang many of the songs "live," with the orchestra.

"I did everything live that I could," he recalls. "In fact, 4 or 5 of the songs are the original, first takes. We did them in the church at 10 o'clock in the morning. I had to get up at 5 or 6 AM just to get my voice in some kind of shape to sing that early. But there was such a warm, wonderful feeling in the studio—even at that hour of the morning—that I knew we were making the right decision."

The result is an album unique in the long discography of Mathis accomplishments. From the first, stirring, city-at-night sounds of the orchestral overture, and the dark introspection of "Lush Life" to the crisp rhythms of "Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me" and the floating reverie of "Day Dream," this is a collection to remember. In its

determined effort to create the aura of Ellingtonia, the album includes works not only by the master, but also by his constant associate, Billy Strayhorn ("Lush Life" and "Day Dream") and longtime sideman Juan Tizol ("Caravan" and "Perdido").

Arrangers Brad Dechter and Byron Olson have strung the songs together with care and tenderness, creating a musical mosaic of orchestral rhythms and sounds—opulently symphonic one moment, roaring with big band energies the next. Some songs balance and contrast with each other; note the way Mathis and the arrangers have placed the sentiments of "Don't You Know I Care" and "I Didn't Know About You" in striking juxtaposition with each other. Here and there, Fred Hersch's piano blossoms through the myriad textures of the ensemble, adding piquant touches of Duke-like commentary to the proceedings, while the trumpet of Bill Berry and the baritone saxophone of Ronny Ross provide zestful spice and flavor to "What Am I Here For," "Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me" and "Something To Live For."

Mathis responds to this superb setting with the performance of a lifetime. Listen to the way his remarkable tenor sails through the high notes of "In A Sentimental Mood" and "Solitude." And hear the contrasting expressions of passion in his interpretations of the musically complex "Prelude To A Kiss" and the stirring spiritual devotion of "Come Sunday." His reading of "Don't Get Around Much Anymore"—thoughtful and inward-directed, complete with its rarely-heard verse—provides a completely new perspective for this familiar Ellington staple. And "In A Mellow Tone" and "What Am I Here For" remind us (if anyone needs reminding) of Mathis' potent, jazz-based way with rhythm tunes.

"I've sung Ellington's music in the past," says Mathis. "It was hard to sing then, and to this day it's still very difficult music. But it rewards the effort—oh, does it ever reward the effort. All these songs represent a very important part of American popular music, and that's why we worked so hard to get them right. I think it was worth the effort!"

Worth it, indeed. And one suspects that Ellington—with a characteristic wink, a smile, and a nod of the head—would agree.

—Don Heckman
July, 1990

Produced by Mike Berniker
Executive Producer: Jay Landers

Engineering by Keith Grant • Assistant Engineer: Jerry O'Reardon
Conducted by Harry Rabinowitz • Pianist: Fred Hersch

Recorded at Petersham Church, England, February 6-10, 1990

Remix Engineer: Tim Geelan • Mastering: Vlado Meller

Special Thanks to: Maxine Sibley, Ed Blau, John Richardson,
Evergreen Studios, Renee Johnson, Bobbi Stevens, Gordon Goodwin

1.

Overture—A Musical Tribute to Duke Ellington

(Byron Olson)

Piano Soloist: Fred Hersch

Arranger: Byron Olson

2.

Lush Life

(Billy Strayhorn)

Arranger: Byron Olson

3.

Don't You Know I Care (Don't You Care I Know)/I Didn't Know About You

(Duke Ellington, Mack David) (Bob Russell, Duke Ellington)

Arranger: Brad Dechter

4.

Things Ain't What They Used To Be (Instrumental)

(Ted Persons, Mercer Ellington)

Arranger: Brad Dechter

5.

In a Sentimental Mood

(Duke Ellington, Manny Kurtz, Irving Mills)

Piano Soloist: Fred Hersch

Arranger: Byron Olson

6.

What Am I Here For

(Frankie Laine, Duke Ellington)

Trumpet Soloist: Bill Berry

Arranger: Brad Dechter

7.

I Got It Bad And That Ain't Good (Instrumental)

(Paul Webster, Duke Ellington)

8.

Something To Live For

(Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn)

Baritone Sax Soloist: Ronny Ross

Arranger: Byron Olson

9.

Solitude

(Eddie DeLange, Duke Ellington, Irving Mills)

Arranger: Byron Olson

10.

Perdido (Instrumental)

(Juan Tizol, Ervin Drake, Harry Lenk)

Arranger: Brad Dechter

11.

Prelude To A Kiss

(Irving Mills, Irving Gordon, Duke Ellington)

Arranger: Brad Dechter

12.

In A Mellow Tone

(Milt Gabler, Duke Ellington)

Arranger: Brad Dechter

13.

Don't Get Around Much Anymore

(Duke Ellington, Bob Russell)

Arranger: Brad Dechter

14.

Satin Doll (Instrumental)

(Duke Ellington)

15.

Come Sunday

(Duke Ellington)

Arranger: Brad Dechter

16.

Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me

(Bob Russell, Duke Ellington)

Trumpet Soloist: Bill Berry

Arranger: Brad Dechter

17.

Caravan (Instrumental)

(Duke Ellington, Irving Mills, Juan Tizol)

18.

Day Dream

(John LaTouche, Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn)

Arranger: Byron Olson

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3. *Don't You Know I Care (Don't You Care I Know)/I Didn't Know About You*

4. *Things Ain't What They Used To Be (Instrumental)* 5. *In a Sentimental Mood*

6. *What Am I Here For* 7. *I Got It Bad And That Ain't Good (Instrumental)*

8. *Something To Live For* 9. *Solitude* 10. *Perdido (Instrumental)* 11. *Prelude To A Kiss*

12. *In A Mellow Tone* 13. *Don't Get Around Much Anymore*

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