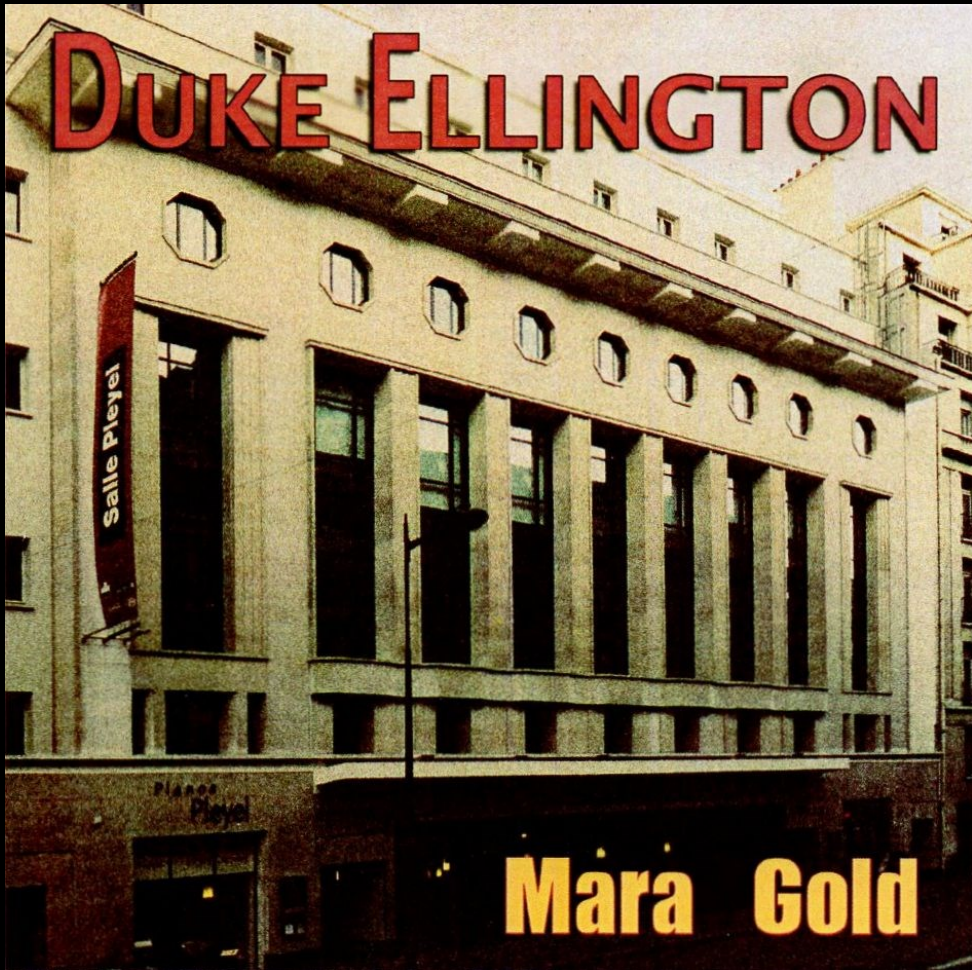


DUKE ELLINGTON

Salle Pleyel

PIANOS
Pleyel

Mara Gold



As the year 1967 rolled in on Duke Ellington, he found himself overlooking a steep cliff.

His writing and arranging partner Billy Strayhorn had taken ill, and would pass on by the end of May of that year, and he, with 16 piece big band in tow, had just embarked on a European tour. The great challenge of Strayhorn being out of action was the fact that now Ellington would once again be tasked with doing the bulk of his writing alone once again, a role he had not had to fully assume since 1937. Now, at the age of 68, he had to endeavor to compose and arrange a new "book" for touring. In addition to his usual extended pieces, he would generally craft solo numbers which were specially arranged to present his soloists in their best possible light before crowds around the world.

On this night in 1967 we hear Duke and his orchestra in rare form, presenting a few of such newly written compositions, featuring luminaries like Cootie Williams, Johnny Hodges, Lawrence Brown, Russell Procope, Paul Gonzalves, Cat Anderson and more.

After a short introductory version of Strayhorn's *A' Train*, Duke ruggedly slams into one of the rawest versions of Strayhorn's *Johnny Come Lately* ever to be caught in recorded form. One interesting aspect of this performance is the apparent refusal of trombonist Buster Cooper to use the plunger on the famous Tricky Sam Nanton break. Another intriguing part is the dedicated "break", which becomes reformatted as a call and response ala-Blanton section featuring John Lamb on bass.

Chelsea Bridge represents the third Strayhorn in a row, he was clearly heavily on Duke's mind this night. Paul Gonzalves delivers his usual passionate rendition. He is without a doubt the most underrated Tenor Saxophonist in Jazz History.

Swamp Goo features Russell Procope scraping out the bottom of the gut bucket, to perhaps depths his predecessor Bigard never even reached. This is dark, guttural Ellington at his most poignant - showing us a darker shade of indigo.

Salome is a very tasty and "Dukish" vehicle for Cat Anderson composed and arranged by the French pianist Raymond Fol. Ellington would continue to play this song throughout 1967.

Rue Bleu features the great trombonist Lawrence Brown. It's a buoyantly swinging melody with great chord changes and would later have lyrics added and become "Woman" as featured in Duke's final Jazz Opera, *Queenie Pie*.

This recording is interestingly the one of only released recording of an original composition featuring drummer Rufus Jones, titled *Mara Gold*.

Cootie Williams delivers as usual on *The Shepherd (Who Watches Over The Night Flock)*, playing the part of the preacher on this composition from Ellington's *Second Sacred Concert*.

Wrapping up our program is *Things Ain't What They Used to Be*, the blues shuffle, featuring the expert blues playing of Johnny Hodges.

Notes by Joseph Cavaseno



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1. Take the A Train (:51)
2. Johnny Come Lately (3:40)
3. Chelsea Bridge (4:33)
4. Swamp Goo (5:02)
5. Salome (4:48)
6. Rue Bleu (3:13)
7. Mara Gold (5:01)
8. The Shepherd (6:38)
9. Things Ain't What They Used To Be (4:36)

Recorded Live at Salle Pleyel Concert Hall, Paris, France, on January 31, 1967

trumpets: Cat Anderson, Cootie Williams, Money Johnson, Herbie Jones, Mercer Ellington

trombones: Lawrence Brown, Buster Cooper, Chuck Connors

reeds: Johnny Hodges, Russell Procope, Paul Gonsalves, Jimmy Hamilton, Harry Carney

piano: Duke Ellington

bass: John Lamb

drums: Rufus Jones



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