



**DUKE ELLINGTON**  
*Vol. 10*  
**“AIR CONDITIONED JUNGLE”**  
Original Recordings 1945

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COMPACT  
**disc**  
DIGITAL AUDIO

NAXOS  
JAZZ  
LEGENDS

85537

GEMA

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ADD

1. Midriff 2. I Didn't Know About You 3. I'm Beginning  
To See The Light 4. Mood To Be Wooed 5. Blue Cellophane  
6. Hit Me With A Hot Note And Watch Me Bounce 7. Subtle Slough  
8. Frantic Fantasy 9. The Air-Conditioned Jungle 10. Tonight I Shall  
Sleep (With A Smile On My Face) 11. The Minor Goes Muggin'  
12. I Ain't Got Nothin' But The Blues 13. Downbeat Shuffle  
14. (Otto, Make That) Riff Staccato 15. The Kissing Bug  
16. Passion Flower 17. Everything But You  
18. Hollywood Hangover

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NAXOS  
JAZZ  
LEGENDS

**DUKE ELLINGTON**

**AIR**  
*Conditioned*  
**JUNGLE**

*Original Recordings*  
Vol. 10 1945

## DUKE ELLINGTON *Vol. 10* 'Air Conditioned Jungle' Original Recordings 1945

1945 was the beginning of the end of the swing era. Within two years, most of the top swing orchestras broke up, and those that somehow survived either became bebop-oriented or purely nostalgic affairs. Even most of the remaining big bands had to call it quits during 1949-50. But as with many other areas of his life, Duke Ellington defied the rules and stood alone, keeping his orchestra together up until the time of his death in 1974.

Duke Ellington, who turned 46 in 1945, at that point in time could already look back on twenty years of major accomplishments and yet his career was not even half over. Born 29 April 1899 in Washington D.C., Edward Kennedy Ellington originally planned to become an artist. But after seeing the local pianists perform ragtime and stride, and enjoying the joyfulness of their music and their lifestyle, he switched permanently to music. Nicknamed 'Duke' due to his classy nature, Ellington learned to play stride piano by slowing down James P. Johnson piano rolls to half-speed. He first became a bandleader before he knew very many songs by having the courage (or recklessness) to take out a large ad in the *Yellow Pages* about his band, which did not exist yet.

In 1922, Ellington first visited New York during a short stint with clarinetist Wilbur Sweatman. He returned in 1923 as a member of

Elmer Snowden's Washingtonians, taking over the band a year later after a money dispute. Duke's piano skills were developing quickly by then and he was in the early stages of becoming an innovative arranger-composer. The Washingtonians were based at the Kentucky Club during 1924-27, a period when Ellington made his first recordings. By 1926 he had formed his 'jungle sound', using the otherworldly tonal distortions of trumpeter Bubber Miley and trombonist Tricky Sam Nanton which they created through their expertise with the plunger mute.

Ellington's big break occurred in December 1927 when his orchestra became the house band at the Cotton Club, a longterm engagement that exposed his band to a large audience on a regular basis on the radio. By 1929, Duke Ellington was considered both a musical genius and a household name. As his orchestra gained in popularity during the 1930s through tours, recordings and movie appearances, many of Ellington's songs became standards. As a pianist, composer, arranger and bandleader, Duke Ellington was considered a musical giant before the swing era even began. His ability to blend together a wide variety of musical voices (ranging from primitive players to virtuosos) into a unified whole was unparalleled.

As 1945 began, Duke Ellington's orchestra was still in peak form. While most jazz historians

consider the 1939-42 version to be his greatest, the 1945 band was on the same level. The team of Ellington and Billy Strayhorn were still composing three-minute gems, some of which became future standards. Clarinetist Barney Bigard and tenor-saxophonist Ben Webster were gone but their successors (clarinetist Jimmy Hamilton and Al Sears on tenor) were comparable. One missed the late great bassist Jimmy Blanton, but the trumpet section with its four distinctive soloists (everyone but the non-soloing Shelton Hemphill) was actually superior to that in the earlier band.

The music on 'Air Conditioned Jungle' is mostly drawn from radio transcriptions rather than commercial recordings, with the exception of a selection taken from a radio broadcast and the two unusual items with Tommy Dorsey. Radio transcriptions were performances recorded specifically for radio airplay but not available for purchase by the general public during an era when regular studio recordings were not played on the air. Quite often the radio transcriptions were less commercial and better recorded technically.

Billy Strayhorn's swinging *Midriff*, is most notable for Lawrence Brown's melodic trombone chorus, a fine statement that stayed pretty similar throughout the year. Nineteen-year-old Joya Sherrill, the band's new vocalist, embraces the melody and lyrics of *I Didn't Know About You*, a performance that also co-stars Brown. Originally the lyrical Ellington ballad was an instrumental called "Sentimental Lady".

*I'm Beginning To See The Light*, although composed by Ellington, was initially a giant hit for Harry James. The song was so popular in 1945 that Duke often used it as an alternate radio theme in addition to "Take The 'A' Train".

One of Duke Ellington's many innovations was writing originals specifically to showcase one soloist. *The Mood To Be Wooed*, heard in an extended version, puts the spotlight on the beautiful tone and romantic style of altoist Johnny Hodges. *Blue Cellophane* features one of Lawrence Brown's finest solos.

The novelty *Hit Me With A Hot Note (And Watch Me Bounce)* has witty words from the underrated lyricist Don George that are sung with spirit by Joya Sherrill. *Subtle Slough* may seem to be an unfamiliar title but it would be renamed "Just Squeeze Me (But Please Don't Tease Me)" when it was outfitted with words the following year. Trumpeter Taft Jordan (who is heard briefly) and Johnny Hodges are the stars. Cornetist Rex Stewart, whose half-valve technique was showcased on the hit "Boy Meets Horn," recorded *Frantic Fantasy* as a follow-up and he really shows off his witty style, range and wide variety of bent notes on this fairly lengthy rendition. Clarinetist Jimmy Hamilton, the most modern soloist in Ellington's orchestra in 1945 and the first to be open to the influence of bebop, is in brilliant form on *The Air Conditioned Jungle*, even taking a long section unaccompanied.

In a unique arrangement, on 14 May 1945 Duke Ellington and trombonist Tommy Dorsey guested on one song apiece with each other's

orchestra. **Tonight I Shall Sleep** is a beautiful Ellington ballad that includes warm statements by Dorsey (whose tone earned him the title of the 'Sentimental Gentleman Of Swing') and Hodges. Sy Oliver's **The Minor Goes Muggin'**, which has solos from both Ellington and Dorsey, features the powerful Tommy Dorsey Orchestra.

This version of **I Ain't Got Nothin' But The Blues** is taken from a radio broadcast and effectively contrasts the two very different vocal styles of Al Hibbler and Kay Davis.

**Downbeat Shuffle** was one of three numbers written by Ellington that were named after music magazines of the time, along with "Esquire Swank" and "Metronome All Out." A straightforward medium-tempo blues on the surface, it features a dialogue between clarinetist Jimmy Hamilton and Harry Carney on bass clarinet, solos from the remarkable trombonist Tricky Sam Nanton, Hamilton, Taft Jordan and tenorman Al Sears, and totally unpredictable ensembles.

(**Otto, Make That**) **Riff Staccato** gives Ray Nance an opportunity to sing, assisted by Jordan's trumpet and the booting tenor of Sears. **The Kissing Bug**, which boasts a particularly catchy vocal by Joya Sherrill, has words written by the singer. Al Sears, one of the most

underrated of Ellington's soloists, and a bopish Jimmy Hamilton are also heard. **Passion Flower** is a contrast, a sensual and impressionistic performance that could only be played with this much intensity and feeling by Johnny Hodges. **Everything But You** was not a major hit but is still performed now and then. Joya Sherrill has fun with Don George's lyrics and baritonist Harry Carney has a good spot.

This collection concludes with the exciting **Hollywood Hangover**, a cooking blues that was arranged for the Ellington band by its composer, trumpeter Buck Clayton. It gives five of Ellington's many soloists (Tricky Sam Nanton, Johnny Hodges, Ray Nance, Jimmy Hamilton and high-note trumpeter Cat Anderson) an opportunity to romp over the ensemble.

Based on these performances alone, 1945 was yet another great year for the Duke Ellington Orchestra, a unique band that will never be duplicated, led by a musical genius whose accomplishments are impossible to measure but are very easy to enjoy.

*Scott Yanow*

— author of *nine jazz books including Jazz On Film, Swing, Bebop, Trumpet Kings, Jazz On Record 1917-76 and Duke Ellington, a picture book on Ellington.*

1. **Midriff** 3:21  
(Billy Strayhorn)  
Featuring Lawrence Brown, trombone  
World Program Service 200-7804,  
mx BB 45492, N 2904-2  
Recorded 2 January 1945, New York
2. **I Didn't Know About You** 2:40  
(Duke Ellington-Bob Russell)  
Joya Sherrill, vocal  
World Program Service 300-6819,  
mx BB 41966, N 2995-4  
Recorded 2 January 1945, New York
3. **I'm Beginning To See The Light** 3:07  
(Duke Ellington-Harry James-Johnny Hodges  
-Don George)  
Joya Sherrill, vocal  
World Program Service 300-6820,  
mx BB 41966, N 2996-2  
Recorded 2 January 1945, New York
4. **Mood To Be Woood** 4:22  
(Duke Ellington-Billy Strayhorn)  
Featuring Johnny Hodges, alto sax  
World Program Service 200-7805/6,  
mx BB 45492, N 2997-1  
Recorded 2 January 1945, New York
5. **Blue Cellophane** 3:04  
(Duke Ellington)  
Featuring Lawrence Brown, trombone  
World Program Service 200-7220,  
mx N 2998-3  
Recorded 2 January 1945, New York
6. **Hit Me With A Hot Note And Watch Me Bounce** 2:28  
(Duke Ellington-Don George)  
Joya Sherrill, vocal  
World Program Service 300-8749,  
mx BB 48320, N 3000-4  
Recorded 3 January 1945, New York
7. **Subtle Slough** 2:48  
(Duke Ellington)  
World Program Service 200-7219,  
mx N 2999-3  
Recorded 3 January 1945, New York
8. **Frantic Fantasy (Prairie Fantasy)** 4:24  
(Duke Ellington-Rex Stewart)  
Featuring Rex Stewart, cornet  
World Program Service 200-7702/3,  
mx BB 44981, N 3003-2  
Recorded 3 January 1945, New York
9. **The Air-Conditioned Jungle** 4:04  
(Duke Ellington)  
Featuring Jimmy Hamilton, clarinet  
World Program Service 200-7807/8,  
mx BB 45492, N 3001-2  
Recorded 3 January 1945, New York
10. **Tonight I Shall Sleep (With A Smile On My Face)** 2:58  
(Duke Ellington-Mercer Ellington-Irving Gordon)  
Tommy Dorsey with Duke Ellington & His  
Famous Orchestra  
Victor 45-0002, mx DS-VB-268-1  
Recorded 14 May 1945, New York

11. **The Minor Goes Muggin'** 3:00  
(Sy Oliver)  
Duke Ellington with Tommy Dorsey & His Orchestra  
Victor 45-0002, mx D5-VB-758-1  
Recorded 14 May 1945, New York
12. **I Ain't Got Nothin' But The Blues** 3:15  
(Duke Ellington–Don George)  
Al Hibbler & Kay Davis, vocal  
A Date With The Duke aircheck, AFRS #16  
Recorded 9 June 1945, Toledo Ohio
13. **Downbeat Shuffle** 4:47  
(Duke Ellington)  
World Program Service 300-8750/1,  
mx BB 48326-1, N 3516-4  
Recorded 31 July 1945, New York
14. **(Otto, Make That) Riff Staccato** 3:13  
(Milt Orent–Si Schwartz)  
Ray Nance, vocal  
World Program Service 300-7164/5,  
mx BB 43664, N 3517-3  
Recorded 31 July 1945, New York
15. **The Kissing Bug** 3:08  
(Billy Strayhorn–Rex Stewart–Joya Sherrill)  
Joya Sherrill, vocal  
World Program Service 300-7166,  
mx BB 43664, N 3538-1  
Recorded 7 August 1945, New York
16. **Passion Flower** 3:33  
(Billy Strayhorn)  
Featuring Johnny Hodges, alto sax  
World Program Service 200-8511,  
mx BB 47687, N 3540-5  
Recorded 7 August 1945, New York
17. **Everything But You** 2:42  
(Duke Ellington–Harry James–Don George)  
Joya Sherrill, vocal  
World 300-7167, mx BB 43664, N 3534-1  
Recorded 7 August 1945, New York
18. **Hollywood Hangover** 3:44  
(Buck Clayton)  
World Program Service 300-8752/3,  
mx BB 48326, N 3536-1  
Recorded 7 August 1945, New York

Duke Ellington & His Famous Orchestra, except track 11.  
Transfers & Production: David Lennick · Digital Restoration: Graham Newton  
Original monochrome photo of Duke Ellington from Michael Ochs Archives / Redferns

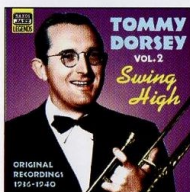
## Personnel

*Tracks 1–10 & 12–18:* DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS FAMOUS ORCHESTRA. Duke Ellington, piano; Cat Anderson, Shelton Hemphill, Taft Jordan, trumpets; Rex Stewart, cornet; Ray Nance, trumpet, violin and vocals, Tricky Sam Nanton, Claude Jones Lawrence Brown, trombones; Jimmy Hamilton, clarinet, tenor; Johnny Hodges, Otto Hardwick, altos; Al Sears, tenor; Harry Carney, baritone, clarinet, alto; Fred Guy, guitar; Junior Raglin, bass; Sonny Greer, drums; Joya Sherrill, Al Hibbler, Kay Davis, vocals; also Tommy Dorsey, trombone (*track 10 only*)

*Track 11:* Duke Ellington with TOMMY DORSEY AND HIS ORCHESTRA. Tommy Dorsey, trombone; Duke Ellington, piano; Charlie Shavers, George Seaberg, Vito Mangano, Gerald Goff, trumpets; Karl De Karske, Richard Noel, Collen Satterwhite, trombones; Sidney Cooper, Gus Bivona, Bruce Branson, Livio Fresk, Vido Musso, saxophones; Robert Bain, guitar; Sidney Block, bass; Buddy Rich, drums

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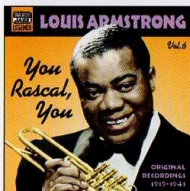
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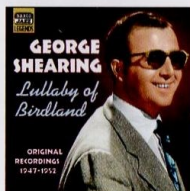
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NOTES AND FULL RECORDING DETAILS INCLUDED

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