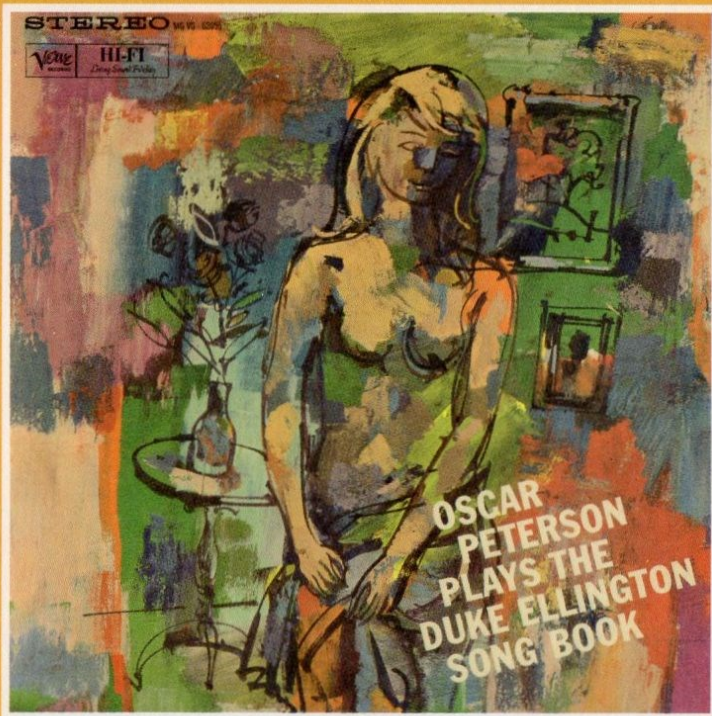


STEREO

Verve

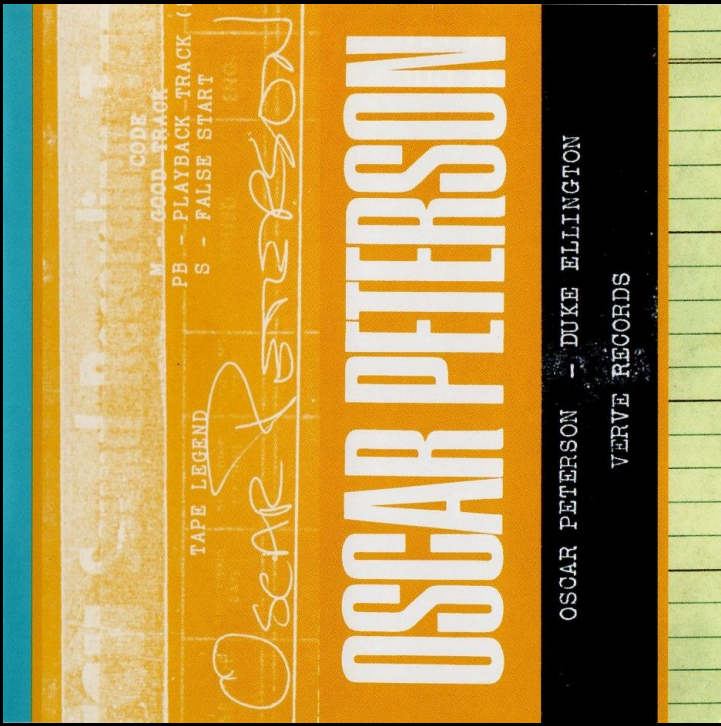
HI-FI

Deep Groove Fidelity



OSCAR
PETERSON
PLAYS THE
DUKE ELLINGTON
SONG BOOK

FUL



CODE

M - GOOD TRACK

PB - PLAYBACK TRACK

S - FALSE START

TAPE LEGEND

OSCAR PETERSON

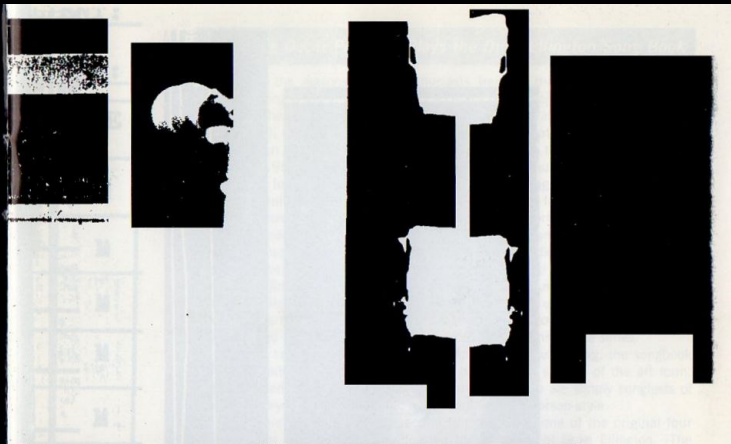
OSCAR PETERSON

OSCAR PETERSON - DUKE ELLINGTON

VERVE RECORDS

OSCAR PETERSON PLAYS THE DUKE ELLINGTON SONG BOOK

	Mstr. No. & Take	Time
1. John Hardy's Wife (Mercer Kennedy Ellington)	936-1	3:20
2. Sophisticated Lady (Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington-Mitchell Parish-Irving Mills)	929-2	2:57
3. Things Ain't What They Used to Be (Mercer Ellington)	932-1	3:11
4. Just A-sittin' and A-rockin' (Duke Ellington-William Thomas "Billy" Strayhorn-Lee Gaines)	924-1	3:41
5. In a Mellow Tone (Duke Ellington)	918-1	3:06
6. I Got It Bad (and That Ain't Good) (Duke Ellington-Paul Francis Webster)	917-5	3:11
7. Prelude to a Kiss (Duke Ellington-Irving Gordon-Irving Mills)	931-1	3:16
8. Cotton Tail (Duke Ellington)	930-4	3:48
9. Don't Get Around Much Anymore (orig. "Never No Lament") (Duke Ellington-Sidney Keith Russell)	935-2	3:57
10. Take the "A" Train (Billy Strayhorn)	928-5	3:15
11. Rockin' in Rhythm (Duke Ellington-Harry Howell Carney)	933-2	2:52
12. Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me (orig. "Concerto for Cootie") (Duke Ellington-Bob Russell)	934-6	2:48
13. Don't Get Around Much Anymore	50054-1	2:31
14. Sophisticated Lady	50051-3	2:24
15. Rockin' in Rhythm	50052-3	2:13
16. Prelude to a Kiss	50053-3	2:30
17. In a Mellow Tone	50055-1	3:41
18. Cotton Tail	50045-6	2:21
19. Just A-sittin' and A-rockin'	50056-1	2:56
20. Things Ain't What They Used to Be	50046-1	3:05
21. Take the "A" Train	50047-1	3:03
22. I Got It Bad (and That Ain't Good)	50048-1	3:11
23. Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me	50049-2	2:14
24. John Hardy's Wife	50050-2	2:34



Oscar Peterson plays piano on all tracks accompanied by:

On tracks 1-12: Barney Kessel (g) and Ray Brown (b).

Recorded early December 1952 probably at Radio Recorders, Hollywood

Original-LP issue: *Oscar Peterson Plays Duke Ellington* Clef MGC 606

On tracks 13-24: Ray Brown (b) and Ed Thigpen (d).

Recorded between July 14 and August 9, 1959 at Universal Recording Studios, Chicago

Original-LP issue: *Oscar Peterson Plays the Duke Ellington Song Book* Verve MGVS-62055

Original recordings produced by **Norman Granz**

Cover illustration by John Altoon

Tracks 1-12 and 13-24 are in their respective LP sequences.

Master numbers show the order in which they were recorded.

Tracks 1-12 were transferred from disc sources. Surface noise is audible.



Photograph by Paul J. Hoefler



Reissuing Oscar Peterson Plays the Duke Ellington Song Book

One of the reasons record enthusiasts treasure the albums produced by Norman Granz is the ambitiousness of so many of his projects; an early album he produced, the *Jazz Scene* collection from 1947–48 (available on Verve CD 314 521 661-2), created a deluxe standard of conceptualization and packaging that had not been seen before in the record business. In the original notes to the December 1952 recordings heard here, Granz rather casually states, "I thought it a good idea to have Oscar do a series of albums featuring some of the best tunes written by our best songwriters." These records were, in fact, unprecedented.

They were not the first popular songbook collections in jazz (for example, Decca released a notable Gershwin set by Eddie Condon in 1945). But no one had ever brought a major jazz figure into a recording studio for a songbook project this extensive: In short measure, Peterson produced four full albums of the best of Berlin, Ellington, Gershwin, and Porter. (Six more albums in the original series would be produced over the following two years!) The use of the same classic David Stone Martin illustration of the pianist for the covers of all the volumes (each printed over a different color backdrop) visually unified the series.

Granz's later foray into the world of American popular song, the songbook LPs by vocalist Ella Fitzgerald, aimed to be definitive surveys of the art form. Peterson's series does not attempt such loftiness; these are simply songfests of some of everyone's favorite tunes, interpreted in the Peterson style.

With this CD we have the second full reissue of one of the original four albums from 1952 — the one devoted to the music of Duke Ellington. (The George Gershwin volume is available on Verve CD 314 529 698-2.) Also included is the full album of Ellingtonia from Peterson's 1959 songbook cycle.

The threesome on the 1952 sides was together only ten months, but its contributions to some twenty studio sessions as Granz's favored rhythm combo (as a trio or as members of larger ensembles) have produced a recorded legacy that, thankfully, is disproportionately grand. Ray Brown's rock-solid bass accompanied Peterson on the September 19, 1949 Jazz at the Philharmonic concert at Carnegie Hall that was the pianist's American debut; in the sixteen years they would spend together as bandmates, Brown and Peterson synchronized their powers of invention marvelously.

Rounding out the trio during this period was Barney Kessel, whose sound was profoundly shaped by three influences: the ground-breaking musical message of his fellow Oklahoma guitarist Charlie Christian, the twangy down-home blues, and his collaborations with Charlie Parker in the flush of the saxophonist's 1947 post-Camarillo comeback.

OSCAR P

50053 Prelude T

50054 Don't Get

50055 In A Mell

50056 Just A Se



Photograph by Claus Orested

The group's piano-guitar-bass instrumentation links it to the ancestral trios led by Nat "King" Cole and Art Tatum, and suitably so, since these two keyboard giants were Peterson's most important stylistic influences. Brown's idols in his formative years included bassist Slam Stewart (a star of the Tatum trio) and the great Ellington bassists Jimmy Blanton and Oscar Pettiford.

Many of the tunes here originally date from the so-called Blanton-Webster era of the Ellington band (Webster being Ben Webster, the group's tenor saxophone star), a creative high-water mark the band reached at the top of the Forties. Like Blanton, Brown is both a virtuoso and a paragon of swing, whose firm and precisely articulated lines are marked by a rich sound that's a joy to hear (check out his Blanton-esque asides on "Just A-sittin'" and A-rockin'"). His role on the '52 date, with the exception of a few brief exchanges with Peterson and his important part in the arrangement of "Rockin' in Rhythm", could be said to be largely a supportive one, as Peterson and Kessel split both melody statements and solo work throughout. But that would undervalue the dynamism of Brown's powerful sound, which kept him front and center as an equal member of the unit. And although Brown would have no extended solos on the 1959 recordings either, his singing responses to the pianist's uncharacteristically reserved statements provide many of the highlights on the second go-round of songbook albums.

With the coming of stereo records in 1958, it was not uncommon for record labels to have their major artists revisit their best-known repertoire in the new format. Granz did this in a big way, by having the then relatively new Peterson trio (with Ed Thigpen on drums) record eleven albums over the course of six sessions in late July and early August of 1959. Ten of these records formed the new songbook series, each packaged in a cover featuring a different brightly colored painting overlaid with a uniform typography. I think it is this series that Peterson was referring to when he noted that "Norman Granz had asked me to play during those sessions in a simpler way, more understandable to the people these albums were aimed at, who weren't necessarily jazz fans." So although this compact disc combines the work of two of Peterson's most important working groups — and indeed, the two groups perform the same tunes — I think it would be unfair to consider this a fair battle of the two Peterson bands.

That Peterson is often playing at the second session with one hand tied behind his back, so to speak, can be ascertained by comparing these sides with the eleventh album he produced during the '59 dates — one of his masterpieces, *The Jazz Soul of Oscar Peterson* (available on Verve CD 314 533 100-2). Both that album and the '59 Ellington album were recorded during the same week of sessions. There is nothing here to rival that album's daredevil soloing, and as the tunes here are programmed to keep the tempo changes between them at a minimum (especially on what was originally the LP's second side), the functional aspect of this album as a mood-setter becomes even more apparent.

But you can't dismiss this as "mood music"; the depth of Peterson's understanding of the repertoire raises it way above that level. There are few touches as expert as Peterson's in exploiting the romantic side of Ellingtonia, as can be heard on his exquisite reading of "Sophisticated Lady" from 1959, one of this collection's highlights. It is Peterson's feel for Ellington's music in general that

separates this album from many of the other entries in the stereo songbook series, in which the trio often seems to just plow through the heaping amount of material Granz gave it to record.

The only jazz performer whose name is regularly included in the pantheon of the great popular songwriters, Ellington may well have been the most accomplished musical artist of the twentieth century. But he was never to conquer Broadway and Hollywood as the authors of the other songbooks had. In their day, however, Ellington's hits blared forth from radios, jukeboxes, and innumerable theater and nightclub bandstands. For also unlike his contemporaries, Ellington had the ideal vehicle for his works, on stage, screen, or records: his own band. His persona, keyboard stylings, and arranging genius, as well as his star soloists and vocalists, defined his music to generations of fans. Although the burgeoning LP era would eventually produce dozens of "So-and-So Plays/Sings Ellington" albums to crowd the record-store bins, the first of Peterson's album-length tributes was at the time a rare nod from one great pianist to another.

The songs from the Ellington band book that Peterson performs include trio arrangements of rockin' big-band instrumentals such as Ellington's "Rockin' in Rhythm", "Cotton Tail", and "In a Mellow Tone", Mercer Ellington's "John Hardy's Wife" and "Things Ain't What They Used to Be", and Billy Strayhorn's "Take the 'A' Train". Also featured are melodies that Ellington introduced on tunes that had the most currency in the popular music world: "Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me", "Don't Get Around Much Anymore", "I Got It Bad (and That Ain't Good)", "Prelude to a Kiss", "Sophisticated Lady", and the Ellington-Strayhorn collaboration "Just A-sittin' and A-rockin'".

Throughout the first songbook volume, Kessel is a wonderful foil for Peterson, as an improviser, as a source of color when backing his solos, and when he engages with him on the varied and thoughtful arrangements. "Just A-sittin' and A-rockin'" has the nicest touch of these, with its suspenseful pause at the end of the head, which precedes one of Peterson's most joyful solos. Actually, I get the sense that the pianist was having a ball making the entire record. On up-tempo numbers like "John Hardy's Wife", his playing has a delightfully bouncy feel (amplified by the rhythmic work of his two cohorts); his solo on that tune shifts back and forth between single-line and chorded passages in a manner reminiscent of Erroll Garner, although it avoids Garneresque voicings. Peterson does consciously invoke the Ellington sound in his theme statement, which mirrors Ellington's introduction from the original recording.

The trio's use of dynamics is also impressive, as in their arrangement of "Rockin' in Rhythm". In his second solo of the 1952 "Cotton Tail", instead of merely quoting Webster's famous unison arrangement for the Ellington reed section, Peterson uses it as the basis for his own improvisation (which would sound great if orchestrated, by the way). As he flies into his second chorus of "Take the 'A' Train", we get to hear Peterson at his most bebopish. And although it would be rough to name a favorite solo here, "Don't Get Around Much Anymore", a prime example of Peterson's sound, rhythmic patterns, and solo style, is a strong contender. It's short, though, and its brevity may have been the one concession Peterson made to justify the first songbook cycle's original issue on the "Pop Series" of Granz's Clef label.

Having already stated my reservations regarding the second cycle, I should note that the accent there is on the trio's naturally easygoing swing and on their melodicism — pure and simple but marked by unexpected turns, such as the beautiful piano coda that concludes "Prelude to a Kiss". Surely, Woody Allen's character in the movie *Play It Again, Sam*, who fails to impress a blind date when he plays a Peterson LP containing a more characteristically busy number (and destroys the record in the process, in a priceless bit of slapstick), would have had better luck with her had he put on this track instead. There's a Count Basie-like sparseness to the theme statements of some of the mid-tempo items such as "Things Ain't What They Used to Be"; back in blues territory, Peterson goes into his soul bag in his solo on this number, but consciously holds back in its chorded finale. The pianist is surely at his best here on the ballads, notably "I Got It Bad (and That Ain't Good)", a dreamy reverie that is both delicate and affecting.

The way Peterson calls forth the Ducal style toward the conclusion of the second version of "In a Mellow Tone" brings to mind a priceless recording of a 1967 Jazz at the Philharmonic tour (issued on Pablo Records) on which Peterson sits in with the Ellington band. The maestro, as usual, states that "the first chorus will be played by the latest addition to our band, our piano player," before taking to the piano bench to play the classic introductory solo to "Take the 'A' Train". Once the famous melody has been played by the band, however, an energized Peterson takes over for the rest of the arrangement. Of course, Ellington had no call to add a pianist to the orchestra, but if he had been, say, a saxophonist, who knows what might have happened?

Cliff Preiss
November 1998



Photograph by Claus Dristed

NO.

Reissue

Supervised, researched, and restored by **Ben Young**
Mastered by **Kevin "toast points" Reeves** at PolyGram Studios
Notes edited by **Peter Keepnews**
Production coordinated by **Bryan Koniarz**
Production assistance by **Tom Greenwood** and **Carlos Kase**
Series art directed by **Patricia Lie** and **Hat Nguyen**
Designed by **Joshua Marc Levy**
Print production managed by **Suzanne White**
Photograph research by **Cynthia Sesso**

Special thanks to Deborah Hay, Fred Klinger, Leon Leavitt, Mark Wilder,
the Institute of Jazz Studies, and the staff at PolyGram Studios

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Executive producer: **Richard Seidel**

A Brief History of Verve

In 1944 Norman Granz promoted his first concert, a benefit held at the Philharmonic Auditorium in Los Angeles. The live recording, issued in 1946, was a prototype of swinging jazz in concert, known as Jazz at the Philharmonic (JATP).

After his initial labels, Clef and Norgran, had been established, Granz inaugurated Verve Records in 1956 — and he brought these earlier efforts under the Verve banner. The Verve catalog grew through the Fifties and Sixties to include most of the major figures in jazz.

Verve, which now incorporates the Mercury Records/EmArcy jazz catalog, is devoted to reissuing its classics on CD while continuing to record major talent producing new jazz classics today.

VISIT US at www.verveinteractive.com

Canonball Adderley Quintet in Chicago
Louis Armstrong Meets Oscar Peterson
Count Basie Again in Paris
Clifford Brown With Strings
Kenny Burrell Guitar Forms
Kenny Burrell and Jimmy Smith Blue Bash!
Chick Corea Light as a Feather (2 CDs)

Duke Ellington Soul Call

Duke Ellington and Johnny Hodges Play the Blues Back to Back

Duke Ellington and Johnny Hodges Side by Side

Bill Evans At the Montreux Jazz Festival

Bill Evans Conversations With Myself

Bill Evans Trio 64

Ella Fitzgerald Sings the Duke Ellington Song Book (3 CDs)

Ella Fitzgerald Sings the Gershwin Song Books (4 CDs)

Ella Fitzgerald Sings the Johnny Mercer Song Book

Ella Fitzgerald Sings the Cole Porter Song Book (2 CDs)

Ella Fitzgerald Sings the Rodgers and Hart Song Book (2 CDs)

Ella Fitzgerald-Count Basie Ella and Basie

Erroll Garner Contrasts

Stan Getz Focus

Stan Getz Micky One

Stan Getz West Coast Jazz

Stan Getz-Charlie Byrd Jazz Samba

Stan Getz-João Gilberto Getz/Gilberto

Dizzy Gillespie Something Old, Something New

Dizzy Gillespie-Sonny Rollins-Sonny Stitt Sonny Side Up

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The Genius of Coleman Hawkins

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Charlie Parker-Dizzy Gillespie Bird and Diz

Oscar Peterson Plays the Duke Ellington Song Book (2 LPs on 1 CD)

Oscar Peterson Trio 4 1 - With Clark Terry

Oscar Peterson The Trio Live From Chicago

Oscar Peterson Trio Night Train

Oscar Peterson Trio We Get Requests

Oscar Peterson Trio West Side Story

Sonny Rollins and the Big Brass

VERVE
MASTER
EDITION

In the mid-Eighties, at the beginning of the CD era, landmark Verve LPs of the Fifties and Sixties were among the first jazz issues in the new format. For these projects the best analog sources had not necessarily been discovered.

Verve Master Edition reissues those classic records, and other classics not yet on CD, using the best available sources. They are restored carefully to produce optimal audio clarity. Extra material is included where relevant: bonus tracks, alternative takes, singles, incomplete versions, and even studio chatter. And these selections are included at the end of the disc, so as not to interrupt the original-LP sequence.

With original-LP cover art, photography, and liner notes faithfully reproduced, extra photographs, and a new essay, Verve Master Edition launches the next round of superior quality Verve jazz reissues.

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Woody Herman (and the Herd) At Carnegie Hall, 1946

Modern Jazz Sextet

Charlie Parker Big Band

Oscar Peterson Trio With Milt Jackson Very Tall

Dinah Washington Sings Bessie Smith

Oscar Peterson Plays Duke Ellington The Original Liner Notes

Writing about Oscar Peterson comes easily, because anyone that likes jazz can't help but be enthusiastic about him and his playing. His playing has not only the sincerity that is part of him, but also the necessary drive and emotion that is so important to jazz, and more than that, Oscar has a great sympathy for what the composers intended. He respects and adheres to the melody, investing in it, however, his great rhythmic drive and feeling and love for jazz. His improvising, though it never alters the melodic line, nevertheless gives each melody a kind of freshness that would have delighted its author.

I thought it a good idea to have Oscar do a series of albums featuring some of the best tunes written by our best songwriters. This, then, is one of the series dedicated to that project. In this album Oscar Peterson plays Duke Ellington.

Actually, it would be difficult for any piano player doing an album of Ellington to do a really bad album, unless he were really a poor piano player, because Ellington, apart from being a pianist himself, is the greatest jazz writer of our time. Though in this series "Peterson Plays Great Songwriters" Oscar had a true feeling for the tunes that he played, I think he felt more at home playing the compositions written by Ellington. In many cases, the tunes written by other composers were not meant for jazz interpretation, but have, through the years, become adapted to that use. Ellington, on the other hand, writes first and foremost with jazz in mind. (As a matter of fact, many of Ellington's jazz compositions have reversed the procedure and become great popular and commercial hits.)

Also, Ellington writes the blues, and many of the compositions in this album, once the theme has been stated, then become pure and simple blues, and these gave Oscar his greatest freedom.

We have tried to pick the best of Ellington, but that is almost impossible unless your album contains a couple of hundred compositions. As a matter of fact, I imagine Peterson will wind up doing a half dozen albums of "Peterson Plays Ellington", before this is done with. It may be that we have left out some of your favorites, but on the other hand, I am pretty sure that all of the selections in this album rank with the best of Ellington and are favorites by everyone's standards.

To paraphrase Duke, "It Don't Mean a Thing if It Ain't Got That Swing", and this album, even though it means a lot of jazz things, above all, does swing.

Norman Grantz
(Reprinted from Clef MGC 606)

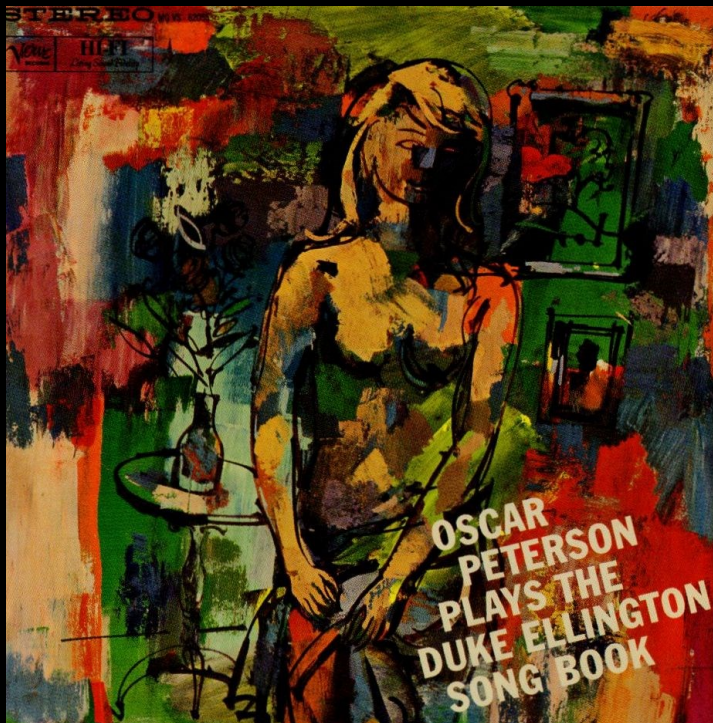
Oscar Peterson Plays the Duke Ellington Song Book The Original Liner Notes

Every great creator has his own style, but Duke Ellington is unique in that he has extended his name to embrace not only his own creations but those of his closest associates. It is, at times, almost that the name of Ellington signifies not a body of work but a musical way of life. His classic signature, "Take the 'A' Train", was, as we all know, not even written by the Duke; Billy Strayhorn dreamed it up in 1939 — but it is as Ellington as is Billy Strayhorn himself. Similarly, "Sophisticated Lady" and "Just A-sittin' and A-rockin'" are Ellington-in-collaboration. But they seem to be as much a part of the Ellington world as those other numbers for which Ellington the man is alone responsible. It is a testimonial to Ellington's character that so many have seen him as the symbol of their own achievement. But Ellington has great modesty, and he has remarked that "jazz is simply the musical expression of an era. . . . One must always remember that none of these variations taken singly mean jazz. Jazz can be summed up in the freedom enabling one to attain many variations."

The Oscar Peterson Trio here gives a new reading of eleven Ellingtonia. Oscar Peterson's fingers flick out sparkling runs, always in tempo with the sustained beat of Ed Thigpen's drums and Ray Brown's bass. Because of the virtuosity of this pianist, it is understandable not to apprehend at first the remarkable balance of this background accompaniment. But a few minutes of listening will illustrate Ray Brown's undisputed mastery of his instrument and show what Whitney Balliett, that critic who does not bestow praise casually, means by Thigpen's "laut, expert work."

As for Oscar Peterson: That conversationally melodic style of his has never served him better. Beyond the masterful technique he has always displayed, there is something about the way he pauses in his performances, as though the piano were drawing an all but imperceptible breath. Are they hemidemisemirests? They are so fugitive they would be difficult to weigh precisely. Yet it is their palpable presence which contributes so much to the style of this man. "When people talk about style they are always a little astonished at the newness of it, because they think that it is only style that they are talking about, when what they are talking about is the attempt to express a new idea with such force that it will have the originality of the thought." The quotation is F. Scott Fitzgerald's. He was talking about writing; but it is applicable too to music — especially to these thoughtful interpretations by Oscar Peterson.

Lawrence D. Stewart
(Reprinted from Verve MGVS-62055)



STEREOPHONIC

Living Sound Fidelity

MG VS-62055

OSCAR PETERSON PLAYS THE DUKE ELLINGTON SONG BOOK

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—Lawrence D. Stewart

The JAZZ SIDE

DON'T GET AROUND MUCH ANYMORE
SOPHISTICATED LADY
ROCKIN' IN RHYTHM
PRELUDE TO A KISS
IN A MELLOW TONE
COTTONTAIL

JUST A SITTING AND A ROCKIN'
THINGS AINT WHAT THEY USED TO BE
TAKE THE 'A' TRAIN
I'VE GOT IT BAD AND THAT AINT GOOD
DO NOTHING TILL YOU HEAR FROM ME
JOHN HARDY'S WIFE

COVER ILLUSTRATION: JAMES ALLISON

ART DIRECTION: EUGENIO BIANCHI

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

Living Sound Fidelity

This record should be played in accordance with the recommended RIAA reproduction standard. The style to should not exceed 75 m/s. Reproduction. This record should not be played with a recording cartridge as it will distort or damage the record. For best reproduction keep this record clean.

STEREOPHONIC

This is a facsimile of the original LP back cover for Verve MGVS-62055.

Reel II

MONSIEUR



OSCAR PETERSON plays DUKE ELLINGTON



MGC-606

Writing about Oscar Peterson comes really, because anyone that likes jazz can't help but be enthusiastic about him and his playing. His playing has not only the security that is part of jazz, but also the necessary drive and emotion that is so important to jazz, and more than that, Oscar has a great sympathy for what the composers intended. He respects and adheres to the melody, inventing it, however, to great rhythmic drive and beauty and, and for jazz. His improvisation, though it never alters the melodic line, nevertheless gives each melody a kind of freshness that would have delighted its author.

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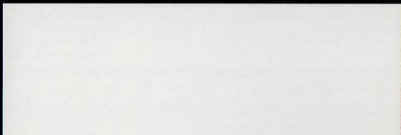
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Thank you for the music in the album.

STINE AND ROCKY • JOHN HARVEY'S WIFE
IN A HELLOW TONE • SOPHISTICATED LADY
DON'T GET AROUND MUCH ANY MORE
PRELUDE TO A KISS • COTICATAI
SO PETER'S TELL YOU HEAR FROM ME
THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE
TASTY TILL A TRAIN • ROCKY IN RHYTHM
I'VE GOT IT BAD AND THAT AIN'T GOOD

In someone Duke "I Don't Mean to Think It is Ain't
Out That Strong", and this album, even though it means
a lot of jazz things, above all, Duke writing.
Nelson George

This is a facsimile of the original-LP back cover for Clef MGC 606.



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Photograph by Don Schitten



STEREOPHONIC*Living Sound Fidelity*

MG VS-62055



OSCAR PETERSON PLAYS THE DUKE ELLINGTON SONG BOOK

Every great creator has his own style, but Duke Ellington is unique in that he has extended his name to embrace not only his own creations but those of his closest associates. It is, at times, almost that the name of Ellington signifies not a body of work but a musical way of life. His classic signature, "Take the 'A' Train," was, as we all know, not even written by the Duke; Billy Strayhorn dreamed it up in 1941—but it is as Ellington as a Billy Strayhorn forecast. Similarly, "Sophisticated Lady" and "Just a Sinner and a Rebel" are Ellington-in-collaboration. But they seem to be as much a part of the Ellington world as those other numbers for which Ellington the man is alone responsible. It is a testimonial to Ellington's character that so many have seen him as the symbol of their own achievement. But Ellington has great modesty, and he has remarked that " jazz is simply the musical expression of an era. . . . One must always remember that none of these variations taken singly mean jazz. Jazz can be summed up in the freedom equalling one to create many variations."

The Oscar Peterson Trio here gives a new reading of eleven Ellingtons. Oscar Peterson's fingers flick out sparkling runs, always in tempo with the sustained beat of Ed Thigpen's drums and Ray Brown's bass. Because of the virtuosity of this pianist, it is understandable not to apprehend at first the remarkable balance of this background accompaniment. But a few minutes of listening will illustrate Ray Brown's undoubted mastery of his instrument and show what Whitney Balliett, that critic who does not bestow praise casually, means by Thigpen's "laid, expert work."

As for Oscar Peterson, that conversationally melodic style of his has never served him better. Beyond the masterful technique he has always displayed, there is something about the way he pauses in his performance, as though the piano were drawing an all but imperceptible breath. Are they head-in-the-sandness? They are, to forgive, they would be difficult to weigh precisely. Yet in their delicate presence which contributes so much to the style of the man, "When people talk about style they are always a little astonished at the necessity of it, because they think that it is only style that they are talking about, when what they are talking about is the attempt to express a new idea with such force that it will have the originality of the thought." The quotation is J. Scott Fitzgerald's. He was talking about writing, but it is applicable too to music—especially to these thoughtful interpretations by Oscar Peterson.

—Lawrence D. Stewart

The Index on:

DON'T GET AROUND MUCH ANYMORE
SOPHISTICATED LADY
ROCKIN' IN RHYTHM
PRESLIE TO A BASS
IN A MELLOW TONE
COTTONTAIL

JUST A SITTING AND A ROCKIN'
THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE
TAKE THE 'A' TRAIN
I'VE GOT IT BAD AND THAT AIN'T GOOD
DO NOTHING TELL YOU HEAR FROM ME
JOHN HARDY'S WIFE

STEREOPHONIC, MADE IN U.S.A.
LIVING SOUND FIDELITY

STEREOPHONIC

Living Sound Fidelity

This record should be played in accordance with the recommended RCA microphone placement. The record should be played at 78 rpm or 45 rpm as indicated. This record should not be played with a mechanical turntable as it may be damaged by contact with the record surface. For more information, see the record label.

STEREOPHONIC

OSCAR PETERSON

PLAYS THE DUKE ELLINGTON SONG BOOK

1. John Hardy's Wife	3:20
2. Sophisticated Lady	2:57
3. Things Ain't What They Used to Be	3:11
4. Just A-sittin' and A-rockin'	3:41
5. In a Mellow Tone	3:06
6. I Got It Bad (and That Ain't Good)	3:11
7. Prelude to a Kiss	3:16
8. Cotton Tail	3:48
9. Don't Get Around Much Anymore	3:57
10. Take the "A" Train	3:15
11. Rockin' in Rhythm	2:52
12. Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me	2:48
13. Don't Get Around Much Anymore	2:31
14. Sophisticated Lady	2:24
15. Rockin' in Rhythm	2:13
16. Prelude to a Kiss	2:30
17. In a Mellow Tone	3:41
18. Cotton Tail	2:21
19. Just A-sittin' and A-rockin'	2:56
20. Things Ain't What They Used to Be	3:05
21. Take the "A" Train	3:03
22. I Got It Bad (and That Ain't Good)	3:11
23. Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me	2:14
24. John Hardy's Wife	2:34

Total playing time 72:50

Oscar Peterson plays piano on all tracks accompanied by:

On tracks 1-12: Barney Kessel (g) and Ray Brown (b).
Recorded December 1952

On tracks 13-24: Ray Brown (b) and Ed Thigpen (d).
Recorded July and August 1959

Original recordings produced by **Norman Granz**

Cover illustration by John Altoon

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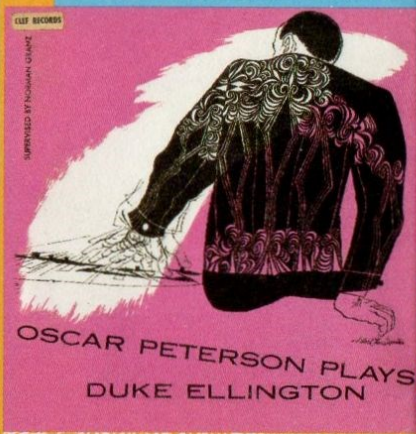


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In 1952 producer Norman Granz brought pianist Oscar Peterson and his trio into the studio to record the first four albums in a series dedicated to the work of America's songwriters. Seven years later, Granz and Peterson did it again, this time in stereo. This CD combines Peterson's 1952 program of Ellingtonia (featuring Ray Brown on bass and Barney Kessel on guitar) with a 1959 session (with drummer Ed Thigpen replacing Kessel) devoted to the same repertoire, but with subtle differences in interpretation.

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