

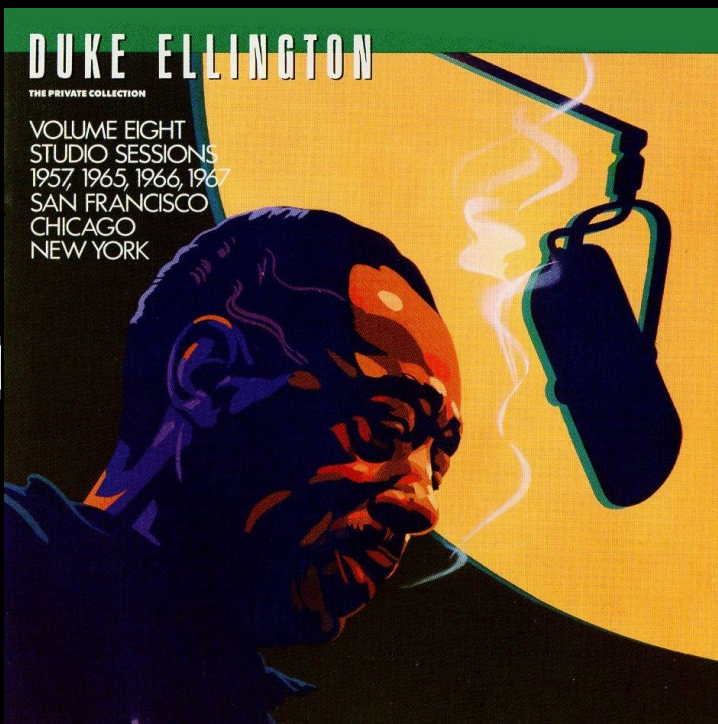


DUKE ELLINGTON
THE PRIVATE COLLECTION
VOLUME EIGHT
STUDIO SESSIONS—1957, 1965, 1966, 1967
SAN FRANCISCO/CHICAGO/NEW YORK

1. COUNTDOWN (2:32)
2. WHEN I'M FEELING KINDA BLUE (5:50)
3. EL VITI (3:21)
4. DRAGGIN' BLUES (6:10)
5. COTTONTAIL (3:42)
6. HOW AJN'T IT? (4:16)
7. THE LAST GO-ROUND (3:32)
8. MOON MIST (6:13)
9. SKILLIPOOP (2:00)
10. BANQUET SCENE (TIMON OF ATHENS) (2:20)
11. LOVE SCENE (3:08)
12. ROD LA ROCQUE (4:13)
13. RHYTHM SECTION BLUES (3:09)
14. LELE (3:07)
15. OCHT O'CLOCK ROCK (3:16)
16. LADY (3:33)
17. RONDOLET (2:43)

PRODUCER: DUKE ELLINGTON

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DUKE ELLINGTON

THE PRIVATE COLLECTION

VOLUME EIGHT
STUDIO SESSIONS
1957, 1965, 1966, 1967
SAN FRANCISCO
CHICAGO
NEW YORK

1. **COUNTDOWN** (2:32)
(Duke Ellington)
Duke Ellington Music Co.
2. **WHEN I'M FEELING KINDA BLUE** (5:50)
(Duke Ellington)
Duke Ellington Music Co.
3. **EL VITI** (3:21)
(Duke Ellington)
Duke Ellington Music Co.
4. **DRAGGIN' BLUES** (6:10)
(Duke Ellington)
Duke Ellington Music Co.
5. **COTTONTAIL** (3:42)
(Duke Ellington)
Duke Ellington Music Co.
6. **NOW AIN'T IT?** (4:16)
(Duke Ellington)
Duke Ellington Music Co.
7. **THE LAST GO-ROUND** (3:32)
(Duke Ellington)
Duke Ellington Music Co.
8. **MOON MIST** (6:13)
(Mercer Ellington)
Tempo Music Inc.
9. **SKILLIPOOP** (2:00)
(Duke Ellington)
Tempo Music Inc.
10. **BANQUET SCENE (TIMON OF ATHENS)** (2:20)
(Duke Ellington)
Duke Ellington Music Co.
11. **LOVE SCENE** (3:08)
(M. Barer/Duke Ellington)
Tempo Music Inc.
12. **ROD LA ROCQUE** (4:13)
(Duke Ellington)
Duke Ellington Music Co.
13. **RHYTHM SECTION BLUES** (3:09)
(Duke Ellington)
Duke Ellington Music Co.
14. **LELE** (3:07)
(Duke Ellington)
Tempo Music Inc.

15. **OCHT O'CLOCK ROCK** (3:16)
(Duke Ellington)
Tempo Music Inc.
16. **LADY** (3:33)
(Duke Ellington)
Tempo Music Inc.
17. **RONDOLET** (2:43)
(Duke Ellington)
Tempo Music Inc.

Personnel:

DUKE ELLINGTON PIANO
CAT ANDERSON/MERCER ELLINGTON/ALLEN SMITH/NAT ADDERLY/COOTIE WILLIAMS/WILLIE COOK/CLARK TERRY/RAY NANCE/HERBIE JONES/HOWARD MCGHEE Trumpets
LAWRENCE BROWN/BUSTER COOPER/CHUCK CONNORS/QUENTIN JACKSON/BRITT WOODMAN/JOHN SANDERS Trombones
RUSSELL PROCOPE/JOHNNY HODGES/JIMMY HAMILTON/PAUL GONSALVES/HARRY CARNEY Reeds
JOHN LAMB/JIMMY WOODS Bass
LOUIE BELLSON/RUFUS JONES/SAM WOODYARD/STEVE LITTLE/CHRIS COLUMBUS Drums

PRODUCER: DUKE ELLINGTON

Executives In Charge of Production: Mercer Ellington/Mel Fuhrman/Stanley Dance/Herb Moelis

Produced for Compact Disc by Harry Hirsch
 Special Thanks To: Samuel J. Lefrak
 Cover Illustration: Nancy Stahl

Although all the recordings in this collection were made, with one exception, in the '60s, they cover more ground geographically and stylistically than others in the series. They are also notable for the different examples of what Duke Ellington called the "first-chair percussionist." Here are three of those who served him in that role for extended periods—Sam Woodyard, Louis Bellson and Rufus Jones. Two others who assumed the role TOGETHER are Steve Little and Chris Columbus.

The '60s were a troubled decade in American history, but for Ellington it was a decade of tremendous activity that culminated with the presentation of the Medal of Freedom and the celebration of his seventieth birthday at the White House. He had become a world figure and he took his band to Europe regularly, to the Middle East, Japan, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and even behind the Iron Curtain. While universities showered honorary degrees upon him, he undertook all kinds of work as new opportunities occurred to write music for films and plays. In 1963, he single-handedly produced a brilliant show, MY PEOPLE, for the Century of Negro Progress Exposition in Chicago, and two years later he fulfilled an old ambition when he presented in Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, a Sacred Concert that proved to be the first in a series of three performed with outstanding success in this country and Europe. The trail of triumphs was only marred by the death of his writing partner, Billy Strayhorn, in 1967.

But in addition to the more glamorous events, Ellington and his band continued to play one-nighters, dances, club dates and festivals. Despite more recording for major labels than ever before, he continued to record his band and sections of it at his own expense, to try out and—as ever—HEAR new ideas in private. He was always well aware of what was happening in the larger world of pop music, where the popularity of rock was dwarfing that of jazz. The publicity jazz festivals were receiving did not make up for shrinking work hours and major jazz venues closed. Youthful crowds meanwhile packed others where crazy lighting effects and deafeningly amplified electronic instruments created mass hysteria in a new kind of bedlam. "We're in a theatrical era now," Ellington told his nephew when they were looking back regretfully at swingin' yesterdays. But better than any other bandleader, he knew how to meet the challenge of new conditions, both in terms of music and

its presentation. At his own record sessions, however, he would often forget for a while that larger world—and its taste.

The first three titles were exceptionally well recorded in San Francisco when the band was playing an engagement at Basin Street West. Louis Bellson was back on drums and his composition, COUNTDOWN (arranged by Art Wiggins), makes an excellent opener. The fact that Allen Smith and Nat Adderley were subbing for Cootie Williams and Herbie Jones in the trumpet section was clearly taken in stride by all concerned. The number makes an admirable up-tempo vehicle for Paul Gonsalves, Cat Anderson and Louis Bellson, the last's neat dexterity being particularly impressive.

WHEN I'M FEELING KINDA BLUE was arranged by Gerald Wilson and composed by his wife. The song and the arrangement are perfect for Johnny Hodges, who is their perfect interpreter. He saunters along, not too distressed, but just "kinda" blue; he knows the value of space and of dynamic contrast, too, stepping back from the mike for one chorus while still "singin'" quietly as though to himself. Ellington, who plays the very appropriate introduction and accompanies so sensitively throughout, never tired of listening to Hodges in this vein. A shorter version was also made, but this is the one he marked "Hold".

EL VITI is probably the most satisfying of all the showcases written for Cat Anderson's high-flying bravura style. Gerald Wilson, its composer and arranger, is a bullfight aficionado and he dedicated this unusually constructed piece to one of the matadors he most esteemed. The flight is most effective in suggesting artistry, pomp and circumstance on the one hand, and death, blood and sand on the other. It is rewarding to compare this and the preceding performances with those recorded by Wilson's own orchestra. Ellington's CORRIDA comes on at a slightly brisker tempo and is perhaps more majestic.

The next four titles are from another of those sessions using uncommon instrumentation, in this case two trumpets, three reeds and three rhythm. Not too much love was lost between the two trumpet players, but Ellington evidently decided to take chance on his ability to maintain harmony DRAGGIN' BLUES, opens with Gonsalves, Carney and Anderson jointly replying to the piano player. It is a quietly simple bit of stage-setting which proves an efficacious way of introducing first Hodges for two choruses, then Anderson in a surprising plungered chorus. Carney

and Gonsalves. The five "ensemble" choruses which follow are obviously of an impromptu nature, but they are very attractively ornamented by Hodges and Ellington.

COTTONTAIL, facetiously sub-titled COTTONHEAD in the studio, romps on the familiar changes and offers glimpses of Hodges and the pianist, but is chiefly concerned with the fast, swirling Gonsalves tenor. It also introduces Rufus Jones, who had taken over Sam Woodyard's chair a short time before.

NOW AINT IT? was written by trombonist Melba Liston (The humor of the title, which the pretty little melodic theme states, requires two more syllables—the indefinite article and a noun.) Changing their usual practices, Cootie Williams takes the first trumpet solo OPEN. Cat Anderson the second with PLUNGER. Carney, Gonsalves and Hodges also have sixteen bars each before Ellington takes it out as the horns return with the quietly rocking theme.

THE LAST GO-ROUND brings back the trusty twelve-bar blues, but with Rufus Jones giving it a modified Latin beat. After a serious chorus from Gonsalves, there is an astonishing one by Anderson. Using a derby he gives the impression he was ready for adventure in the world of the so-called "free" jazz. Hodges returns us to a righteous path, followed by Williams (open) and Carney. Then Ellington steps in to play until he is ready to signal a fade to the engineer. His work on this session, as on WHEN I'M FEELING KINDA BLUE, is exemplary and shows him to have been a blues pianist with few equals.

MOON MIST was presented in Volume 1 of this series, but this much longer version offers more scope to Paul Gonsalves in what might be described as a soliloquy or reverie. The shadowy backgrounds, to which the muted trumpets contribute so magically, add much to his realization of the title's significance.

SKILLIPOOP and BANQUET SCENE are both from the music Ellington wrote for a Stratford, Ontario, production of Shakespeare's TIMON OF ATHENS in 1963. He utilized the first number in other contexts and had a typically humorous explanation of the title's meaning. Here its primary purpose is to display Sam Woodyard in a drum spectacular. BANQUET SCENE, also known as COUNTER THEME, is yet another gorgeous showcase for Hodges' artistry. Newcomers to jazz do not always understand why so many still regard him as the greatest musician on his instrument. He was, after all, still playing creatively fifteen years after Charlie Parker died.

LOVE SCENE (also known as MAKING THAT

SCENE) was never the hit it might have been. Ellington recorded several vocal versions of it, but here we have a jaunty instrumental rendering with good solos by those dependables, Ray Nance, Lawrence Brown and Johnny Hodges, the last taking the honors in an effortless chorus.

ROD LA ROCQUE remains a mystery title as this is written, the identity of the dedicatee not having been established, but it gets a smooth, soulful performance featuring Hodges, Brown, Carney and Nance over Woodyard's steady, time-defining rimshots.

RHYTHM SECTION BLUES is the kind of music Ellington often played at the end of a session or while his men were taking a break, without intending it to be recorded. Fortunately these engaging two minutes of blues were captured on tape. After THE LAST GO-ROUND, for another example, a number of visiting musicians were in the studio and one of them, pianist Ram Ramirez, requested old favorites while horns were being put in cases and the drums dismantled. Ellington happily obliged with, among others, the original SQUEEZE ME, but none was recorded.

The four titles from the last session suggest Ellington's awareness of the heavy rhythms of rock, because he uses two drummers—the relatively young Steve Little and the veteran Chris Columbus (father of Sonny Payne)—to create a comparable effect. On LELE, where Lawrence Brown is the only soloist, he has the brass roaring loudly in an almost barbaric fashion. OCHT O'CLOCK ROCK was traveling under the code name of MICH in 1967, but it enjoyed considerable popularity when retitled. Hodges and Williams are the soloists. LADY is neither ladylike nor sophisticated. The brass is given a simple riff to repeat vigorously against a sweeping melody for the reeds, while solos by Carney and Anderson provide relief from the lady's intensity. RONDOLET is the session's most enjoyable track, again largely because it features the irresistibly propulsive rhythm of the nonpareil Hodges, but also because Chris Columbus switches to the shuffling rhythm for which he was famous. The writing, the somewhat monotonous role given the trombones, and the heavy rock rhythms on the first three titles, all indicate an experiment. Ellington wanted to HEAR what his band sounded like with "contemporary" touches. When he recorded RONDOLET a few months later as SLAMAR IN D FLAT, it was very considerably different! "I don't try to do anything fashionable—ever," he once told an interviewer.

author of THE WORLD DUKE ELLINGTON
(Da Capo Press)

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1. **COUNTDOWN** (2:32)
San Francisco, August 30, 1965
2. **WHEN I'M FEELING KINDA BLUE** (5:50)
San Francisco, August 30, 1965
3. **EL VITI** (3:21)
New York, August 30, 1966
4. **DRAGGIN' BLUES** (6:10)
New York, December 29, 1966
5. **COTTONTAIL** (3:42)
New York, December 29, 1966
6. **NOW AIN'T IT?** (4:16)
New York, December 29, 1966
7. **THE LAST GO-ROUND** (3:32)
New York, December 29, 1966
8. **MOON MIST** (6:13)
Chicago, January 1957
9. **SKILLIPOOP** (2:00)
New York, March 17, 1965
10. **BANQUET SCENE
(TIMON OF ATHENS)** (2:20)
New York, March 17, 1965
11. **LOVE SCENE** (3:08)
New York, April 14, 1965
12. **ROD LA ROCQUE** (4:13)
New York, April 14, 1965
13. **RHYTHM SECTION BLUES** (3:09)
New York, April 14, 1965
14. **LELE** (3:07)
New York, July 11, 1967
15. **OCHT O'CLOCK ROCK** (3:16)
New York, July 11, 1967
16. **LADY** (3:33)
New York, July 11, 1967
17. **RONDOLET** (2:43)
New York, July 11, 1967

PRODUCER: DUKE ELLINGTON

This is one in a series of ten albums that, taken together, is the definitive collection of the significant compositions written by Duke Ellington and some other songs long associated with his body of work. These recordings were personally produced by Duke Ellington himself and have remained in his private collection since their completion. Documenting a large portion of his musical work, some of which had never been commercially released, these private recordings are being made available to the public by Ellington's family for the first time.

These classic recordings have been transferred to digital from their original analog form. To keep as close to the original sound as possible, the best equipment has been utilized.

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