

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE BIG BAND ERA

DUKE ELLINGTON



45
ATLANTIC



DUKE ELLINGTON
RECOLLECTIONS OF THE BIG BAND ERA

STEREO

GEMA

Side One

1. Minnie The Moocher
(Cab Calloway & Irving Mills) (2:47)
 2. For Dancers Only
(Sy Oliver, Don Hayes & Vic Schoon) (3:04)
 3. It's A Lonesome Old Town When You're Not Around
(Harry Tobias & Charles Kisco) (2:20)
 4. Cherokee (Ray Noble) (2:54)
 5. The Midnight Sun Will Never Set
(Quincy Jones, Henri Salvador
& Dorcas Cochran) (3:06)
 6. Let's Get Together (Chick Webb) (2:40)
- Produced by Duke Ellington
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DUKE ELLINGTON
RECOLLECTIONS OF THE BIG BAND ERA

STEREO

GEMA

Side Two

1. I'm Gettin' Sentimental Over You
(Ned Washington & George Bassman) (3:25)
 2. Chant Of The Weed (Dor Redman) (3:26)
 3. Ciribiribin
(A. Pestalozza, arr. by Duke Ellington) (3:28)
 4. Contrasts (Jimmy Dorsey) (2:45)
 5. Christopher Columbus
(Andy Razaf & Lean Berry) (3:05)
 6. Auld Lang Syne
(Trod, arr. by Duke Ellington) (2:19)
- Produced by Duke Ellington
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Duke Ellington began a project to record the most famous band themes in the fall of 1962. Nostalgia for "the good old days," particularly for the music of the Big Band Era, was rife even then, so it was not a matter of forecasting the desire for yesterday—and the day before yesterday in the form of Scott Joplin's music—that is so characteristic of the 1970s. A dozen of the themes he so elegantly re-interpreted were, in fact, immediately released in an album whose title asked the perennial question: "Will Big Bands Ever Come Back?" Fortunately, it is still available (Reprise 6188) so this collection—the remainder, and every bit as good—will complement it splendidly.

The period was a very happy one in Duke Ellington's recording career. Frank Sinatra had been instrumental in securing him a contract that made him his own producer or, as he would prefer to be called, arranger. He enjoyed the responsibility and set about justifying it energetically and conscientiously. His band was in excellent shape, and those who constantly compared his present with his past must eventually recognize that this was an extremely fruitful phase.

MINNIE THE MOOCHER was, of course, Cab Calloway's biggest hit and this arrangement was brought to the studio by Eddie Bert, who had been the hide-bo-man's right hand for several years. Acknowledging his authority, Ellington retired to his supervisory duties in the control room, assigning Bertfield the role of conductor. Consequently, there is no piano on this, but nor is there any vocal. Instead, the mooching girl friend of an imaginary King of Sweden is graphically depicted by trombonist Lawrence Brown, his mate and plunger.

FOR DANCERS ONLY, Jimmie Lunceford's stirring theme, was written by Sly Oliver, who sent Ellington the original arrangement. "Oh,

hah!" he told Mercer Ellington, "he'll play it his own way anyway." As it happened, few liberties were taken. Ellington even remembered Willie Smith's contribution: "Would you like to noodle before the clarinet, Bab?" he asked Johnny Hodges, who declined with a monosyllable. The clarinetist is Jimmy Hamilton, and Cat Anderson takes care of the uptairs trumpet work originally played by Paul Webster.

IT'S A LONESOME OLD TOWN was the melancholy theme of Ben Bernie, a wit and radio personality, who fronted a good band for many years. There were ten takes, the routine being modified step by step until Ellington professed himself satisfied. Chuck Connors is rarely heard as a soloist, but his bass trombone is very effective in the first chorus. In the absence of the pianist again, rhythmic exotica is provided by Cat Anderson rhabbing two derbies together and Sam Woodyard using fingertips instead of sticks on the drums. The combinations of cup-muted brass and reeds are evocative, and Lawrence Brown's melodic farewell is appropriately forlorn.

CHEROKEE returns the compliment so often paid Ellington by Charlie Barnet, whose theme it was. The brass use plungers and derbies expertly, and there are solos by Harry Carney, Jimmy Hamilton and Johnny Hodges before Sam Woodyard's drum break, after which Paul Gonswales takes it out, relaxed and easy. The pianist was in the control booth, so here again much weight was on the shoulders of Ernie Shepard and Sam Woodyard. There is plenty of evidence in this album to explain why Ellington esteemed them both so highly.

THE MIDNIGHT SUN WILL NEVER SET is a moving composition by Quincy Jones. It sounds as though it were specially written for

Johnny Hodges, so successfully does he bring out the number's wistful charm. The supervisor was back at the piano for this one, and to exhort Sam Woodyard to "put a little more sex in there!"

LET'S GET TOGETHER was long the theme of the King of Savaoy, Chick Webb. Sam Woodyard idolized him and seems to be saying so at the drums throughout. The original arrangement was by Edgar Sampson, who very well knows the kind of tempo preferred by dancers in Harlem's famous ballroom. The solos are by a couple of Webb's contemporaries, Cootie Williams and Harry Carney.

I'M GETTIN' SENTIMENTAL OVER YOU was Tommy Dorsey's theme, so a solo from trombonist Lawrence Brown is anticipated, but it doesn't happen. Ellington liked the element of surprise as much as some of his musicians disliked invidious comparisons. The trombone section is given a degree of prominence, but the featured soloist is Ray Nance on cornet, and he always knew how to express sentiment without being corny, just as Dorsey did.

CHANT OF THE WEED was Don Redman's magnum opus, imaginative and mysterious, a thoroughly engaging creation. As Ellington admitted, it represented tough competition and a real challenge when he was at the Cotton Club and Redman at Connie's Inn in Harlem. The pianist is again at work here, the inimitable sax section does its thing, and there are solo passages by Carney, Hodges, Gonswales and Nance before some whimsical repartee between Hamilton and Connors on clarinet and bass trombone respectively.

CIRIBIRIBIN, as befits Harry James, is turned over to the trumpet section, and here Billy Strayhorn takes Ellington's place at the key-

board. In the introduction, Cootie Williams (with plunger) answers Ray Nance. Then Williams and Anderson (easily distinguishable) dialogue. Choruses by Nance and Burrows follow before Williams and Anderson return. Note that owing to damage in transit, the stereo version could not be used, so this track is heard in processed stereo originating from a mono reference copy borrowed from Duke Ellington's personal collection.

CONTRASTS primarily features two reed virtuosos, Paul Gonswales and Jimmy Hamilton. Their graceful playing would surely have won the approval of Jimmy Dorsey, whose attractive theme it was.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS was Fletcher Henderson's big hit of 1936, and for a time it restored him to the prominence he so richly deserved. The stinging brass is exciting, and solos by Nance, Gonswales and Procope are sequenced in the order of those originally played by Ray Eldridge, Chu Berry and Buster Bailey. Last, AULD LANG SYNE was recorded on December 29th, a couple of nights before Guy Lombardo would preside over the New Year revels at the Hotel Roosevelt one more time.

Lombardo never played it quite like this, because he didn't have such talented individualists as Gonswales, Hamilton, Carney, Nance, Brown and Williams, but around midnight on December 31st most of the people probably wouldn't have been able to tell the difference. In any case, the message that this performance (like the whole album) is trying to communicate is a very simple one:

AULD ACQUINTANCE SHOULD NEVER BE FORGOT.

STANLEY DANCE
author of
THE WORLD OF SWING
(Scribner)

DUKE ELLINGTON

SIDE ONE

- 1. MINNIE THE MOOCHER**
(By Cab Calloway & Irving Mills; Mills Music.
ASCAP; Time: 2:47)
Recorded on December 13, 1962
- 2. FOR DANCERS ONLY**
(By Sly, Oliver, Don Raje & Vic Schoen; MCA, ASCAP; Time: 3:40)
Recorded on December 14, 1962
- 3. IT'S A LONESOME OLD TOWN
WHEN YOU'RE NOT AROUND**
(By Harry Tobin & Charles Knecht; Bourne Co., ASCAP; Time: 2:40)
Recorded on December 11, 1962
- 4. CHEROKEE**
(By Ray Noble; Shapiro, Bernstein & Co., ASCAP; Time: 2:54)
Recorded on January 4, 1963
- 5. THE MIDNIGHT SUN WILL
NEVER SET**
(By Quincy Jones, Henri Salvador & Dorcas Edouard; Music of Today, BMI; Time: 3:09)
Recorded on January 3, 1963
- 6. LET'S GET TOGETHER**
(By Chick Webb; American Academy of Music, ASCAP; Time: 2:40)
Recorded on November 28, 1962

SIDE TWO

- 1. I'M GETTIN' SENTIMENTAL
OVER YOU**
(By Ned Washington & George Busman; Mills Music; ASCAP; Time: 3:26)
Recorded on November 29, 1962
- 2. CHANT OF THE WEED**
(By Don Redman; Mills Music, ASCAP; Time: 3:26)
Recorded on November 29, 1962
- 3. CIRIBIRIBIN**
(By A. Poldoski; Arranged by Duke Ellington; Tempo, ASCAP; Time: 3:28)
Recorded on December 11, 1962
- 4. CONTRASTS**
(By Jimmy Dorsey; Robbins, ASCAP; Time: 2:45)
Recorded on December 20, 1962
- 5. CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS**
(By Andy Razaf & Leon Berry; Edwin H. Morris, ASCAP; Time: 3:02)
Recorded on November 29, 1962
- 6. AULD LANG SYNE**
(Traditional; Arranged by Duke Ellington; Tempo, ASCAP; Time: 2:50)
Recorded on December 29, 1962

The personnel is:

Duke Ellington, piano; Cootie Williams, Cat Anderson, Ray Burrows & Ray Nance, trumpets; Lawrence Brown, Buster Cooper & Chuck Connors, trombones; Johnny Hodges, Russell Procope, Jimmy Hamilton, Paul Gonswales & Harry Carney, reeds; Ernie Shepard, bass; Sam Woodyard, drums.

On For Dancers Only Bill Berry replaces Cootie Williams on trumpet. On It's A Lonesome Old Town when You're Not Around & Cranbun Edoce Preston, trumpet, is added. On Cranbun Billy Strayhorn replaces Duke Ellington on piano.

Let's Get Together, I'm Gettin' Sentimental Over You, Chant Of The Weed & Christopher Columbus were recorded at Universal Recording Studios, Chicago, Illinois.
Recording engineer: Bernie Dapper.

All the other selections were recorded at Fine Recording Studios, Bayshore, New York.
Recording engineers: Fred Christie & Richard Mays.

PRODUCED BY DUKE ELLINGTON

Re-mixed at Atlantic Recording Studios, New York, New York.
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Cover illustration: Roger Huszen.
Art director: Bob Dufren.
Production coordinator: Ihan Mimaroglu.