

A black and white photograph of Duke Ellington. He is shown from the waist up, wearing a light-colored suit jacket and a dark scarf. He is seated at a piano, with his hands on the keys. His head is tilted back, and his mouth is open as if he is singing or shouting. His right hand is raised in the air, palm facing forward, in a conducting gesture. The background is dark, and the lighting is dramatic, highlighting his face and the piano.

**DUKE  
ELLINGTON  
& HIS ORCHESTRA**

**ROTTERDAM  
1969**

**STORYVILLE**



# **DUKE ELLINGTON & HIS ORCHESTRA**

**Duke Ellington and His Orchestra**  
**De Doelen Concert Hall, Rotterdam, The Netherlands 1969.11.07, night concert.**

Duke Ellington's European Tour in 1969 took place mainly in November, the band leaving New York on October 27th, and returning on December 1st.

The tour was arranged by George Wein, the arranger of The Newport Jazz Festivals, who also had other bands playing Europe at the same time, usually under the heading "Newport Jazz Festival", among those Miles Davis, Lionel Hampton and George Wein's own group, The Newport Jazz Festival All Stars.

The Ellington band played virtually every night on this tour, often two concerts a night, in many of the major cities of Europe. The tour was reported to be a great triumph for Duke, who was still at the top of his powers in 1969 with many new pieces in the repertory.

Beside the regular concerts, his Concert of Sacred Music was performed in Stockholm, Sweden, in Paris, France and in Barcelona, Spain.

The concert on this CD took place in one of the most important cities of The Netherlands, Rotterdam, situated along the mouth of the river Rhine, and being one of the busiest seaports of Europe.

The concert hall was De Doelen, a concert and convention center in the city, originally built in 1934, but destroyed during World War II, together with most of the city. It was however rebuilt in 1966, and became famous for its splendid acoustics. It is the residence of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra.

It was only the second time Ellington played in Rotterdam, the first time being in January 1967. The success of these concerts led to other concerts by the Ellington band in 1971 and 1973, in De Doelen.

Duke Ellington gave two concerts in 1969, on November the 7th. The music on this CD is the entire second concert. (There was an "after-party" later in the night where Duke with a quartet played some numbers that were recorded. *Storyville* hopes to be able to issue these recordings on a future CD).

In 1969 the band still had many of the key soloists, that the public had known for years: Johnny Hodges, Cootie Williams, Lawrence Brown, Harry Carney and Paul Gonsalves. And they were still in great form.

Trumpeter Herbie Jones didn't join the tour, so the trumpet section was supplemented by expatriated Americans like Benny Bailey and Nelson Williams, or European musicians like Rolf Ericson on trumpet. Trombonist Buster Cooper had left the band mid 1969, and had been substituted by Benny Green, who left again just before this European tour. So the band was also missing a trombone. But this was solved, as one can see from films and stills from the tour, by letting saxophonist Norris Turney take the third seat in the trombone section.

The sax section was as great as ever with Gonsalves, Hodges, Procope and Carney, and Harold Ashby instead of Jimmy Hamilton, who had left the band in July the year before.

Victor Gaskin on the bass and Rufus "Speedy" Jones on the drums formed a fine rhythm section, and Wild Bill Davis had been added as an extra attraction in September for an almost 2 years' stay. Beside his organ playing he contributed compositions and arrangements to the band, which can be heard here in R.T.M. Despite the problems in the brass sections, the band sounded real good, no doubt inspired by the enthusiastic reception they received everywhere in Europe. Maybe some of the spectators had a feeling that this could be one of the last chances to hear the band in its full glory. And indeed - about half a year later, Johnny Hodges had died, and the band had lost its greatest solo voice. But for this European tour Hodges played as beautifully as ever, as can be heard in this Rotterdam concert.

Impresario George Wein, who had arranged the tour for Duke, toured Europe as well with his own group The Newport All Stars, but rarely on the same bills as Duke. One occasion, where they played, if not on the same night, then on the same occasion was the "Berlin Jazz Days" in the beginning of November. Duke gave his 2 concerts in Berlin Philharmonic on November 8th, whereas George Wein played 3 days before, and later had a record out from this occasion dedicated to Duke. The whole Berlin jazz festival was in fact dedicated to Duke Ellington, and people like Miles Davis and Thelonious Monk were also featured, Miles playing his usual repertoire at the time, while Monk played several Ellington compositions.

During the tour there were even recording possibilities for some of the sidemen of the Ellington band, and an LP record "Paul Gonsalves with The Swingers & The Four Bones" recorded in Paris on November 17th was later issued on the French record label Riviera.



This is the entire second concert in De Doelen Concert Hall, and a very well played one. It opens up with perhaps a little chaotic twelve bars of **Take The A Train**, going into a full performance of **The C Jam Blues**, with Cootie, Paul Gonsalves, Lawrence Brown, and Russell Procope on the clarinet taking the solos. Duke enters the stage, and goes without announcement into **Kinda Dukish** and **Rockin' In Rhythm**, fresh and vigorous as ever, solos by Duke, Lawrence Brown, Harry Carney and Cat Anderson. After the Duk-ish "... love you madly..." welcome to the audience follows a proper version of **Take The A Train**, with Duke himself and Cootie Williams as soloists. Cootie's solo is of course founded on the original Ray Nance solo from 1941, a solo that virtually had become an almost indispensable part of the composition. But Cootie does not fail to make the solo very much his own. **Up Jump**, announced by Duke as **Tenorsaxophonic Callistenics**

features Paul Gonsalves "hero of The Newport Jazz Festival", as Duke introduces him. But as always with Paul Gonsalves his playing is much more than gymnastic exercises on the tenor, Paul being the artist he is. After this up-tempo piece, the tempo – but not the intensity – slows down for the centerpiece of the concert **La Plus Belle Africaine**, an almost nine minutes long piece that had been in the band's repertory since 1966. The piece was written for the first International Festival Of Negro Arts, held in Dakar, Senegal in January 1966. In this incarnation of the number it features Russell Procope, once again on the clarinet, bassist Victor Gaskin, drummer Rufus Jones, Harry Carney on the baritone sax, and not the least Ellington's piano playing all the way. **La Plus Belle Africaine** leads naturally into a little drums show-off by Rufus Jones, called **Come Off The Veldt (And Into The Bush)**, a drum solo with some orchestral chords at the end.



Cat Anderson's composition **El Gato** was premiered at The Newport Jazz Festival in July 1958. The original arrangement featured solos by all the trumpets in the band. When the piece was renewed in 1969, Cat was the only soloist. But the arrangement still featured the astonishing passages for the trumpets as a section, a compliment to the musicianship of all involved.

About midway through the concerts used to be the shining hour for Johnny Hodges – the primadonna spot. He takes full advantage of it, delivering the solo playing only he was capable of.

The first of the Johnny Hodges solo pieces is an oldie from the mid-thirties, **Black Butterfly**. This piece was first recorded by the Ellington band in 1936 with Lawrence Brown as the main soloist. In 1940 Cootie Williams and His Rug Cutters recorded it again. In 1969 Duke revitalized this beautiful ballad as a solo vehicle for Hodges. It's Norris Turney who plays the clarinet part. The number was played often at concerts during 1969 and 1970 until the death of Johnny Hodges, and was even played a few times after, as late as in 1973.

Next follows **Things Ain't What They Used To Be**, heard many times before and after, but rarely as lushly swinging as here. **Don't Get Around Much Anymore** was originally named **Never No Lament** when recorded as an instrumental in 1940, with solos by the stars of the period Cootie Williams, Johnny Hodges and Lawrence Brown, all three again in the band by 1969. The tune became so popular that lyrics were written for it (by Bob Russell) in 1945, and the title was changed to the one we use today. (In fact you can hear the very first vocal version of the piece on the Duke Ellington Treasury Show from July 21st 1945 (Storyville 2CD 9039008 – D.E.T.S. vol. 8)). Later the composition was taken up again by Duke as an instrumental, and from 1964 the arrangement featured only Johnny Hodges.

Two medleys follow. The first medley consists of three instrumental numbers, first **Caravan**, very short, just the main theme. Then follows **Mood Indigo**, with Russell Procope playing the second theme on the clarinet, followed by a long and beautiful solo by Lawrence Brown, complete with plunger mute and growl effects. **Sophisticated Lady** comes last in this medley with Harry Carney in the solo role.

The second medley consists of three pieces featuring singer Tony Watkins, who was something of an acquired taste for the hard core fans of Ellington's music, but who was featured steadily by Duke during his almost 7 years with the Ellington band. Two pieces by Ellington **Making That Scene**, and the oldie **It Don't Mean A Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)**. The third song of this vocal medley is a piece by Duke, Cootie Williams and Tony Bennett, **Be Cool And Groovy For Me**, which was titled **Put-Tin** in its original instrumental form. Cootie Williams plays the trumpet solo.

After the medleys Wild Bill Davis on the Hammond organ, is introduced by Duke with due reference to Davis' arrangement of April In Paris for Count Basie in the mid-fifties. Here he plays **Satin Doll**, with Duke taking over the Basie routine from April In Paris shouting out "one more time" making Davis play the theme again as an encore. Cat Anderson is heard with his unbelievable high notes on the trumpet.

Wild Bill Davis is also featured in the next piece, Davis' own blues **R.T.M.**, which also features Johnny Hodges in a 6 choruses long beautiful solo, down-to-earth blues playing. The Rotterdam concerts represent the premiere recorded version of this number.

Two choruses by Ellington piano lead to the rousing finale of the concert **In Triplicate**. This blues, a feature for the three tenors of the band, started its life as Paul Gonsalves' **Wailing Interval** between the two parts of **Diminuendo** and **Crescendo In Blue**. It was eventually titled **In Duplicate** or **In Quadruplicate**, according to the number of tenor-sax soloists at a performance. Paul Gonsalves takes the first long solo, then follows Harold Ashby, and Norris Turney. After a chorus more to each, all three exchanges fours and unite in the last few bars.

The concert closes with a few bars of Satin Doll as a sign off. I am sure a happy time was had by all in Rotterdam.

*Bjarne Busk*

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Cat Anderson, Cootie Williams,  
Ambrose Jackson, Mercer Ellington,  
Nelson Williams, Benny Bailey (tp)  
Lawrence Brown, Chuck Connors (tb)  
Russell Procope (as,cl)  
Johnny Hodges (as)  
Norris Turney (as,ts,cl,fl)  
Harold Ashby (ts,cl)  
Paul Gonsalves (ts)  
Harry Carney (bar,cl,b-cl)  
Duke Ellington (p)  
Victor Gaskin (b)  
Rufus Jones (d)  
Tony Watkins (vcl)

Recorded De Doelen, Rotterdam, Holland  
November 7, 1969 (2nd concert)



## DUKE ELLINGTON & HIS ORCHESTRA

- |  |      |   |      |
|--|------|---|------|
| 1. Take The A Train (theme) & C Jam Blues<br>( <i>B. Strayhorn/D. Ellington</i> )              | 4:23 | 11. Medley #1: Caravan –<br>Mood Indigo –<br>Sophisticated Lady   | 7:23 |
| 2. Kinda Dukish & Rockin' In Rhythm<br>( <i>D. Ellington/D. Ellington-H. Carney-I. Mills</i> ) | 5:34 | ( <i>D. Ellington-J. Tizol-I. Mills/D. Ellington-<br/>B. Bigard-I. Mills/D. Ellington-Parish-I. Mills</i> )           |      |
| 3. Take The A Train. ( <i>B. Strayhorn</i> )   | 5:31 | 12. Medley #2: Making That Scene –<br>It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing –<br>Be Cool And Groovy For Me | 5:52 |
| 4. Up Jump. ( <i>D. Ellington</i> )  | 3:25 | ( <i>D. Ellington/D. Ellington-I. Mills/D. Ellington-<br/>C. Williams-T. Bennett</i> )                                |      |
| 5. La Plus Belle Africaine. ( <i>D. Ellington</i> )  | 8:50 | 13. Satin Doll  | 6:48 |
| 6. Come Off The Veldt. ( <i>D. Ellington</i> )   | 2:09 | ( <i>D. Ellington-B. Strayhorn-J. Mercer</i> )  |      |
| 7. El Gato. ( <i>C. Anderson</i> )   | 4:04 | 14. R.T.M. ( <i>W.B. Davis</i> )  | 6:19 |
| 8. Black Butterfly. ( <i>D. Ellington-Currither-I. Mills</i> )                                 | 4:36 | 15. In Triplicate into Satin Doll   | 8:14 |
| 9. Things Ain't What They Used To Be<br>( <i>M. Ellington</i> )                                | 3:10 | ( <i>D. Ellington/D. Ellington-B. Strayhorn-J. Mercer</i> )   |      |
| 10. Don't Get Around Much Anymore<br>( <i>D. Ellington-B. Russell</i> )                        | 2:50 |   |      |

Total time 79:10

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