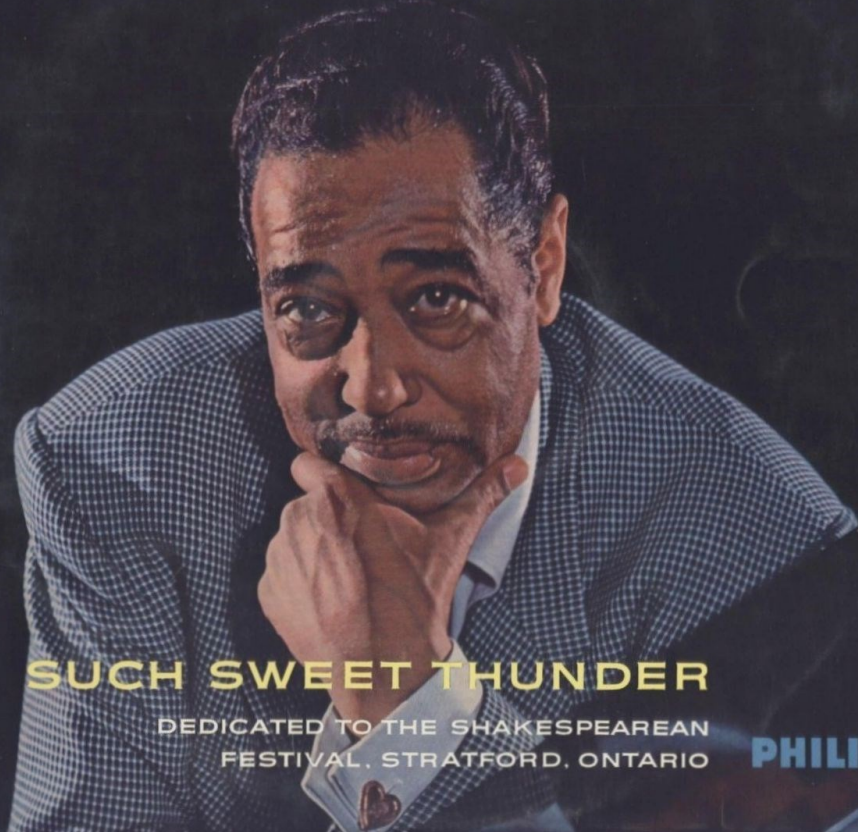


DUKE ELLINGTON

AND HIS ORCHESTRA




SUCH SWEET THUNDER

DEDICATED TO THE SHAKESPEAREAN
FESTIVAL, STRATFORD, ONTARIO

PHILIPS

PHILIPS

 *Minigroove* 33 $\frac{1}{3}$

AA 07278.1 L
(Side 1)

B 07278 L



SUCH SWEET THUNDER

SUCH SWEET THUNDER
SONNET FOR CAESAR
SONNET TO HANK CINO
LADY MAC
SONNET IN SEARCH OF A MOOR
THE TELECASTERS
(D. Ellington/B. Strayhorn)

DUKE ELLINGTON
and his Orchestra



PHILIPS

 *Minigroove* 33 $\frac{1}{3}$

AA 07278.2 L
(Side 2)

B 07278 L



SUCH SWEET THUNDER

UP AND DOWN, UP AND DOWN
(I Will Lead Them Up And Down)
SONNET FOR SISTER KATE
THE STAR-CROSSED LOVERS
MADNESS IN GREAT ONES
HALF THE FUN
CIRCLE OF FOURTHS
(D. Ellington/B. Strayhorn)

DUKE ELLINGTON
and his Orchestra





Side 2:

Such sweet thunder

Sonnet for Caesar

Sonnet to Hook Cinq

Lady Mac

Sonnet in search of a muse

The Tricenters

Side 2:

Up and down, up and down (I will lead them up and down)

Sonnet for sister Kate

The star-crossed lovers

Madness in great ones

Half the fun

Circle of fourths

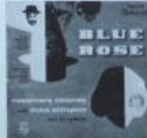
One of the more surprising things about a man by Duke Ellington based upon Shakespeare is that that of this enormous undertaking has not really surprised anybody. So accused an Ellington devotee to his talents, so prepared are we for the unexpected, that the announcements of this work were greeted with enthusiasm, curiosity, and skepticism, but seldom with surprise. It is, of course, all in splendid spite that might have happened if Ellington and Shakespeare had been contemporaries, but there is no doubt that Duke, who calls himself an "amateur playwright," is a very professional showman. And there is also no doubt that the Bard had faith in his soul. The artistic, creative, and of great creative man has achieved the results we all hoped for: a new music work by Duke Ellington.

While it is true that Duke visited the Hathaway cottage during his first visit to England in 1955, the spark that ignited Ellington's desire to create a work based upon Shakespeare's character was his successful appearance at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Stratford, Ontario. Thirteen sets were written, composed by him and his band by visitors to the festival. Duke began to think, then theater to write a work. One stated, the new music arrived our registers and was rushed to completion in time for the West for Madison concert at Town Hall in April 1957. Those who heard Such sweet thunder introduced will remember its spontaneous public and critical acceptance that April Sunday. They will also remember that Duke had set his tone to complete the final number in the suite. That number was recorded four days later and is the final revelation of the recording. In Act IV, Scene 1, of A Midsummer night's dream appear the lines "I never heard no musical a dward, such sweet thunder." Be it Ellington or Shakespeare who leads you to

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SUCH SWEET THUNDER

Duke Ellington and his Orchestra

listen to what Duke describes as his "attempt to parallel the vignettes of some of the Shakespearean characters in miniature — sometimes in the past of centuries," such scenes should be most certainly in

Such sweet thunder

The title selection which opens the suite was inspired by Othello and it, in quite Duke's opinion, "the sweet and winning, very convincing story Othello told Desdemona. It must have been the most, because when her father complained and tried to have the marriage annulled, the Duke of Venice and that if Othello had said that to his daughter, she would have gone for it too." The piece itself features brass in plungers and the swartling trumpet of Ray Nance.

Sonnet for Caesar

This is the first of *Jane* sonnets Duke has included in the suite, intended to coincide with the fourteen-line sonnet form. In this one, Jimmy Hamilton and Ray Nance, clarinet and violin, Russell Procope and Paul Gonsky, alto and tenor saxophone, and Johnny Hodges and John Lewis, alto and alto saxophone. Paul is Chick Terry, who plays the famous quotation.

Sonnet for sister Kate

This is the first of *Jane* sonnets Duke has included in the suite, intended to coincide with the fourteen-line sonnet form. In this one, Jimmy Hamilton is featured in a slow, imperial pose similar also for Van Woodford's hand drumming. The lead ensemble heralds of angels.

Sonnet to Hank Cinq

Ellington uses a second sonnet to pay tribute to Shakespeare's peroration with history. In it Bill Wenzman is featured in a lightening timpani solo. Duke notes that "the changes of tempo have to do with the changes of pace and the trip as a result of war."

Lady Mac

This is the first of a number of selections dedicated to single characters; in this case, of course, Lady Macbeth. "Through she was a lady of noble birth," Ellington says, "we suspect there was a little rancor in her soul." And so, a pair with that begins with an Ellington piano solo, continues with a sax ensemble and a pretty interlude by Russell Procope on alto, and then features Chick Terry in three-quarter time. The ominous low chords hint at what else Lady Mac had in her mind.

Sonnet in search of a muse

This sonnet features Jimmy Wood on bass and opens with what Duke calls a "H.F." introduction on piano. Clarinet accompanies the bass throughout the delicate, evocative glimpse of the Muse.

The Tricenters

Mild chaos with typical Ellington musical license. "We think this liberty," he notes, "of combining characters from two plays. It seems that the three witches and Iago had something in common in that they all had something to say to us, and then the Tricenters." The three girls are played here by three timpanists, and Iago is Harry Carney's bassline sax. And just as emphasis the beginning there are a few moments of very persistent silence.

Up and down, up and down (I will lead them up and down)

Side 2 opens with a piece describing Puck's intervention in A Midsummer night's dream. Desdemona and Helena, Lysander and Heron, and Oberon and Titania, the king and queen of the fairies, were constantly being maneuvered into awkward

positions by Puck, who just stood on the side and laughed and said "Lead, what fools these mortals be." The complex you find are Jimmy Hamilton and Ray Nance, clarinet and violin, Russell Procope, and Paul Gonsky, alto and tenor saxophone, and Johnny Hodges and John Lewis, alto and alto saxophone. Puck is Chick Terry, who plays the famous quotation.

Sonnet for sister Kate

Another sonnet follows, this one dedicated to a lady who needs an introduction. It is played by Quentin Jackson, whose torch-song-with-plunger reading is in perfect sonnet form.

The star-crossed lovers

Kansas and Juliet, of course, and a most beautiful melody to describe their love. "This is the sad story of two beautiful people," Duke says, and Hodges, alto as Juliet and Gonsky, tenor as Kansas give fresh and very moving emotion to their story.

Madness in great ones

Here is an Ellingtonian parallel to Hamlet's character during the time he was deceiving his mother. ("Madness in great ones may not so untroubled go") Hamlet was trying to make her believe he was crazy, and, as Duke notes, "in those days crazy didn't mean the same thing it means now." At any rate, there this is with the Ellington ensemble playing a sonnet that does justice to Shakespeare. "Cal" Anderson is the featured, atmospheric, tenor who, all but disappears into outer space at the end.

Half the fun

Duke's one-line introduction to this number is: "The generally accepted theory is that the music was specific." And the music matches it as the Ellington fair for an exotic string and a musical ostinato before proceeds the Nile, the larger, an orchestral fox and — Johnny Hodges.

Circle of fourths

The final part of the suite is inspired by Shakespeare himself and the last entire part of his artistic contribution is featured, comedy, history, and the ancient. Paul Gonsky is featured throughout a piece that exemplifies masterfully the scope of the Bard, progressing by the musical interval of a fourth through every musical key. It is a wild and intense conclusion to the Shakespearean suite.

Such sweet thunder

is dedicated to the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Stratford, Ontario, and to Duke's many fans. It is the most complete performance took place at the Music for Madness concert at Town Hall, Sunday evening, April 28, 1957.

— Irving Townsend

PERSONNEL

"Cal" Anderson, Ray Nance, Chick Terry, Willie Cook — trumpet; John Lewis, Bill Wenzman, Quentin Jackson — violins; Johnny Hodges, Harry Carney, Russell Procope, Jimmy Hamilton, Paul Gonsky — saxophones; Van Woodford — drums; Jimmy Wood — bass; Duke Ellington — piano.

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