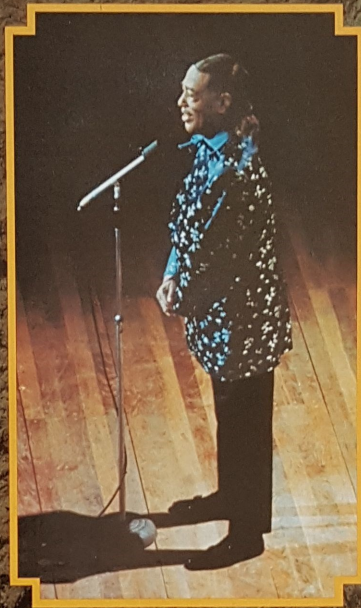


DUKE ELLINGTON'S
THIRD SACRED CONCERT
THE MAJESTY OF GOD
AS PERFORMED IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY



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Face 1 Stéréo

APL1 0785

APL1 0785 A



DUKE ELLINGTON'S THIRD
SACRED CONCERT THE MAJESTY OF GOD
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(P) 1975

Victor

TRÉVÉ

1. INTRODUCTION BY SIR COLIN CROWE 1'28
2. DUKE ELLINGTON'S INTRODUCTION 1'26
3. THE LORD'S PRAYER - MY LOVE
(D. Ellington) 7'49
4. IS GOD A THREE-LETTER WORD FOR LOVE
(Part II) (D. Ellington) 4'27
5. IS GOD A THREE-LETTER WORD FOR LOVE
(Part III) 3'46
6. THE BROTHERHOOD
(D. Ellington) 5'46

MARKING DÉPOSÉE (S. R.) - REGISTERED TRADEMARK (U) USED BY AUTHORITY AND UNDER CONTROL OF SACEM
MARQUE DÉPOSÉE (S. R.) - REGISTERED TRADEMARK (U) USED BY AUTHORITY AND UNDER CONTROL OF SACEM
MADE IN FRANCE FROM MASTER RECORDING OWNED OR CONTROLLED BY SACEM
TOUT DROIT DE PRODUCTEUR PHONOGRAPHIQUE ET DU PROPRIÉTAIRE DE LA MARQUE DÉPOSÉE
REPRODUCTION, EXECUTION PUBLIQUE, RADIODIFFUSION DE LA MARQUE DÉPOSÉE

Face 2 Stéréo

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TRÉVÉ

7. HALL ELUJAH (D. Ellington) 3'32
8. EVERY MAN PRAYS
IN HIS OWN LANGUAGE
(D. Ellington) 11'10
9. AIN'T NOBODY NOWHERE
NOTHIN' WITHOUT GOD
(D. Ellington) 4'29
10. THE MAJESTY OF GOD
(D. Ellington) 7'27

MARKING DÉPOSÉE (S. R.) - REGISTERED TRADEMARK (U) USED BY AUTHORITY AND UNDER CONTROL OF SACEM
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DUKE ELLINGTON'S THIRD SACRED CONCERT THE MAJESTY OF GOD AS PERFORMED IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Introduced by
SIR COLIN CROWE, G.C.M.G.,
Chairman of the United Nations Association;

featuring
ALICE BABS
with the orchestra:
DUKE ELLINGTON, piano;
Mercer Ellington, Harold Johnson,
Johnny Coles, Barry Lee Hall, trumpets;
Vince Pulfredite, Art Baron,
Chuck Connors, trombones;
Harry Carney, Harold Minerive,
Russell Procope, Harold Ashby, Percy Marlon, reeds;
Joe Benjamin, bass; Quentin White, drums;
Toney Watkins, vocalist; and
THE JOHN ALLDIS CHOIR,
Conducted by **Roscoe Gill, Jr.**
Produced by **Mercer Ellington**
Recorded in Westminster Abbey, London,
on United Nations Day, 24 October, 1973.



Left to right: Irene Harris, Duke Ellington, H.R.H. Princess Margaret, and The Very Rev. The Dean of Westminster Mr. Eric S. Abbott, K.C.V.C., M.A., D.D.

Side A

Introduction by Sir Colin Crowe (1:20)

Duke Ellington's Introduction (1:26)

The Lord's Prayer:

My Love (7:49)

In God a Three-Letter

Word for Love! (Part I) (4:27)

In God a Three-Letter

Word for Love! (Part II) (3:46)

The Brotherhood (5:46)

Side B

Hallelujah (3:32)

Every Man Prays

in His Own Language (11:10)

Ain't Nobody Nowhere

Nowthin' Without God (4:20)

The Majesty of God (7:27)

Public performance clearance—ASCAP



Duke Ellington, Sir Colin Crowe, G.C.M.G., Chairman of the United Nations Association, and H.R.H. Princess Margaret at the Westminster Abbey Concert in aid of U.N.A.



View of Concert that took place in Westminster Abbey given by Duke Ellington for the United Nations Association.

Duke Ellington's last Grand Tour began with the premiere of his third and final sacred concert in Westminster Abbey on United Nations Day, 24 October, 1973, six months precisely before his death. The distinguished audience, drawn from many lands and peoples, included H.R.H. Princess Margaret and Prime Minister Heath. In all its centuries of eventful history, the great abbey had never been the setting for a performance such as Ellington had devised.

He and his orchestra reached London very early the morning before the concert after flying overnight from New York. Alice Babs flew in from Sweden, and Roscoe Gill had arrived a week ahead to rehearse the choir. As with each new edition of the sacred concert, the rehearsal began in an almost frighteningly casual manner. Only Ellington had the sequence and all the parts in his head, and no one seemed less concerned with clock and calendar than he.

The first rehearsal took place in St. Margaret's adjacent to the abbey. The original parish church, and comparatively small and intimate, it had that combination of grace and dignity in which medieval church-builders excelled. By American standards, its temperature was also medieval, but additional clothing was produced and work proceeded apace. Although the band had rehearsed some of the music the previous week (after its nightly performances at Mr. Kelly's in Chicago), Alice Babs had seen none of it before. Always the complete-yet unpolished—professional, she was soon running through her songs with the composer at the piano, and once again demonstrating a remarkable affinity for his music. Her exquisite vocal quality, unaffected charm, mastery of English, clear articulation and sight-reading ability—these together had the effect of raising everyone's spirits.

But next morning, when rehearsals were resumed, there was a serious setback. Paul Gonçalves, one of the orchestra's major assets, had obviously been entertained too extravagantly by London "friends." His condition was so alarming that he was taken forthwith to Westminster Hospital. Ellington observed his departure sadly, but with philosophical calm. In five decades as a bandleader, he had had many similar experiences. However, it was a reverse that had to be overcome, and not merely in terms of the reeds as a section. Tenor saxophonist Harold Ashby would have to assume additional solo responsibility.

After lunch, rehearsals were transferred to the abbey itself, and they continued throughout the afternoon and into the evening until the throngs outside began to be admitted. In fact, there was barely opportunity for the musicians to change before the concert started. Ellington himself, with his customary mastery of time, made it to the great west door to greet Princess Margaret and the Prime Minister with mere seconds to spare.

• • •

Like its two predecessors, the performance expressed Ellington's feelings about God directly and naturally. He considered the sacred concert his most important work, since they gave him the opportunity to serve as the Lord's "messenger-boy." His intent was to deliver the messages clearly, with emphasis, but without needless, sophisticated embellishment.

After Sir Colin Crowe's crisp welcoming speech, he therefore began with a statement of *The Lord's Prayer* on the piano. His piano playing, indeed, was crucial to the whole enterprise, for it had to provide not only the usual links and cues to his musicians, but also to the vocal soloists and the choir. In this solo, he established a mood that was at once serious, sensitive and moving. Moreover, it served as an introduction to *My Love*, a splendid new vehicle for the incomparable artist of Alice Babs. Featured on this, too, was Harry Carney's baritone saxophone, whose warm sonority triumphed over the ancient building's peculiar acoustics.

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STEREO

Alice Babs was also entranced with posing the rhetorical dual question in *In God a Three-Letter Word for Love!*, as well as giving its logical answer. The knowledge that he was writing for a glorious voice and talent like hers was undoubtedly a source of inspiration and comfort for the composer before and during this concert. Amplifying lines written by Fr. Gerry Porcick of Montreal were declaimed with conviction by Toney Watkins, whom Ellington would sometimes refer to humorously as "a jackleg preacher."



Duke Ellington and Alice Babs in concert.

The Brotherhood, a tribute to the United Nations, was executed with enthusiasm by the choir and Kansas City's Special Representative on this occasion, Harold Ashby. In his optimistic view of mankind's potential, Ellington pictured the worldly brethren swinging joyously together, without inhibitions, while his tenor saxophonist expounded on the importance of peace and good times for all.

The John Alldis Choir is a professional group which can be heard on the London Philharmonic's recording of *The Messiah*, but this was nothing new to it, but we may be sure that the sprightly Ellington accompaniment to *Hallelujah* was. The pianist, and the late Joe Benjamin on bass, furnished the singers with a foundation full of rhythmic vitality.

Every Man Prays in His Own Language developed a thought Ellington found useful in explaining his approach to the very first sacred concert. The prayers were made in a variety of languages and idioms, the most unusual being one he wrote specially for trombonist Art Baron to play on his second instrument, the recorder. This is interesting because Ellington, with his strong liket and dislikes where tone color was concerned, long resisted the use of the flute in his orchestra. The more vocal or "human" quality of the recorder's sound obviously appealed to him.

Ain't Nobody Nowhere Nowthin' Without God was the most appropriate and perhaps the last song he wrote for Toney Watkins, whose big voice and commanding delivery made it so effective in the abbey.

The final selection here, *The Majesty of God*, was again entrusted to those on whom he could best depend that night—Alice Babs and Harry Carney—and they did full justice to its serene beauty. It makes poignant listening now, for when Ellington wrote it he knew that he himself would soon be facing the majesty of God.

STANLEY DANCE

author of *The World of Duke Ellington*,
published by Charles Scribner's Sons.



Prime Minister Edward Heath, Duke Ellington and H.R.H. Princess Margaret talking informally before the beginning of the Duke's third (and final) concert in Westminster Abbey.

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