

Vol. 20

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA • THE TREASURY SHOWS



D.E.T.S

2  
CD SET

**CD1**

1. **Take The "A" Train 0:40**  
(Billy Strayhorn)
2. **A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing 3:29**  
(Billy Strayhorn)
3. **Duke Ellington Bond Promo 0:58**
4. **Main Stem 3:19**  
(Duke Ellington)
5. **A Ghost Of A Chance 3:14**  
(Victor Young)
6. **Interview with Duke Ellington 0:39**
7. **In A Jam 3:22**  
(Duke Ellington)
8. **I'm Just A Lucky So And So 3:48**  
(Duke Ellington, David Mack)
9. **Stomp, Look And Listen 3:45**  
(Duke Ellington)
10. **Come Rain Or Come Shine 3:18**  
(Harold Arlen, Johnny Mercer)
11. **Duke Ellington Bond Promo 1:29**
12. **Things Ain't What They Used To Be 2:07**  
(Duke Ellington)
13. **Summertime 2:57 (2)**  
(Duke Ellington)
14. **Jack The Bear 3:33**  
(Duke Ellington)

**15. Sentimental Lady 3:19**

(Duke Ellington)

**16. In A Mellotone 3:07**

(Duke Ellington)

**17. Rockin' In Rhythm 4:23**

(Duke Ellington)

Total time: 47:34

**CD2**

1. **Take The "A" Train 0:43**  
(Billy Strayhorn)
2. **Mood To Be Wooed 4:47**  
(Duke Ellington, Johnny Hodges)
3. **Duke Ellington Bond Promo 1:03**
4. **Johnny Come Lately 2:40**  
(Billy Strayhorn)
5. **They Say It's Wonderful 2:45**  
(Irving Berlin)
6. **Strange Love 2:44**  
(M. Rozsa, E. Heyman)
7. **Honeysuckle Rose 3:17**  
(Fats Waller)
8. **Don't Take Your Love From Me 4:44**  
(Henry Nemo)
9. **Duke Ellington Bond Promo 1:04**
10. **Blue On The Double 4:40**  
(Buck Clayton)
11. **Take The "A" Train 0:36**  
(Billy Strayhorn)
12. **Take The "A" Train 0:51**  
(Billy Strayhorn)
13. **Come Sunday 6:27**  
(Duke Ellington)
14. **Light 4:24**  
(Duke Ellington)
15. **Duke Ellington Bond Promo 1:01**
16. **Lover Man 3:23**  
(Jimmy Davis, Roger Ramirez, Jimmy Sherman)
17. **Riff Staccato 3:10**  
(Duke Ellington)
18. **Mood Indigo 4:39**  
(Duke Ellington)
19. **Duke Ellington Bond Promo 1:08**
20. **Riff 'N' Drill 2:17**  
(Duke Ellington)
21. **Johnny Come Lately 1:32**  
(Billy Strayhorn)
22. **Emancipation Celebration 2:25**  
(Duke Ellington)
23. **Go Away Blues 2:06 (1)**  
(Duke Ellington)
24. **Don't Get Around Much Anymore 2:13**  
(Duke Ellington, Bob Russell)
25. **Things Ain't What They Used To Be 1:00**  
(Duke Ellington)

Total time: 67:45

The Washingtonians opened at the Hollywood at 215 W. 49th Street on September 1,

## PERSONNEL:

### CD1

#### DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA:

##### Track 1-12

Shelton Hemphill, Taft Jordan, Francis Williams, Cat Anderson, Reunald Jones (tp), Ray Nance (tp, vln, vo), Joe Nanton, Lawrence Brown, Claude Jones, Wilbur DeParis (tb), Jimmy Hamilton (cl, ts), Johnny Hodges, Otto Hardwick (as), Al Sears (ts), Harry Carney (bs, cl, bcl), Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn (p 1), Fred Guy (g), Oscar Pettiford (b), Sonny Greer (dr)

**Broadcast, Rehearsal Hall, Paramount Theatre, NYC, June 1, 1946**

##### Track 13-17

Taft Jordan, Wallace Jones, Harold Baker (tp), Ray Nance (tp, vln), Joe Nanton, Lawrence Brown, Juan Tizol (tb), Jimmy Hamilton (cl, ts), Johnny Hodges (as, ss), Nat Jones (cl, as), Ben Webster (ts), Harry Carney (bs, cl, bcl), Duke Ellington (p), Fred Guy (g), Junior Raglin (b), Sonny Greer (dr), Al Hibbler (vo 2)

**Broadcast, Hurricane Restaurant, NYC, September 10, 1943**

### CD2

#### DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA:

##### Track 1-20

Shelton Hemphill, Taft Jordan, Francis Williams, Cat Anderson, Reunald Jones (tp), Ray Nance (tp, vo, vln), Joe Nanton, Lawrence Brown, Claude Jones, Wilbur DeParis (tb), Jimmy Hamilton (cl, ts), Johnny Hodges, Otto Hardwick (as), Al Sears (ts), Harry Carney (bs, cl, bcl), Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn (p 1), Fred Guy (g), Oscar Pettiford (b), Sonny Greer (dr), Kay Davis, Al Hibbler (vo)

**Broadcast, WEEU Studios May 4, Reading, PA., June 8, 1946**

##### Track 21-25

Taft Jordan, Wallace Jones, Harold Baker (tp), Ray Nance (tp), Joe Nanton, Lawrence Brown, Juan Tizol (tb), Jimmy Hamilton (cl, ts), Johnny Hodges (as, ss), Nat Jones (cl, as), Ben Webster (ts), Harry Carney (bs, cl, bcl), Duke Ellington (p), Fred Guy (g), Junior Raglin (b), Sonny Greer (dr), Betty Roché (vo 1)

**Broadcast, Hurricane Restaurant, NYC, September 7, 1943**

## INTRODUCTION

### DUKE AND RADIO

The story of Duke Ellington's rise to greatness is a tone parallel to the rise of radio itself. Radio had been around since Guglielmo Marconi's inventions in the 1890s, but had few commercial applications until the night of November 2, 1920, when KDKA of Pittsburgh aired the results of the Harding-Cox presidential election to an audience limited to a few hundred radio hobbyists, who would have had to build their own radios by assembling coils and condensers. Ellington was 21 years old at the time and was getting work both painting signs and hiring out his band, the Duke's Serenaders. America would soon catch the "radio bug," and by the end of the decade, radio "sets" were a fixture of daily life in millions of households. Thanks in large part to radio, by 1929, Ellington's "weird" tunes, and his unique orchestral sound - a dark bass-rich blend of colors and moods - had cut through the static and found a national audience.

New York already had twelve radio stations when Duke Ellington first arrived in March of 1923. In only a few months the unknown Washingtonian got an opportunity to broadcast, in a remarkable Saturday, August 25, noon-time program of African American music. Station WDT, run by the Ship Owners' Radio Service, had redirected its signal from sea to land, and given free reign to manager Vaughan de Leath, a popular entertainer. The "Original Radio Girl" asked *Pittsburgh Courier* columnist Floyd Snelson and pianist Roland Irving to direct the *Negro Radio Concert* that also included blues singers Trixie Smith, Rosa Henderson, and Lena Wilson (accompanied by Fletcher Henderson), and pianist Thomas "Fats" Waller. "Duke Ellington, Vocalion recording artist and orchestra," according to radio listings in New York newspapers, were to contribute eight tunes, all popular numbers and show tunes of the day such as *(Yes, We Have No) Bananas*. Ellington was evidently enamored with the power of the new medium. Given a choice of jobs, Ellington chose the Hollywood, a dingy cellar club near Times Square at the heart of New York's burgeoning radio industry, over Connie's Inn, an elegant black and tan in Harlem.

The Washingtonians opened at the Hollywood at 203 W. 49th Street on September 1,

1923. By their third week, they were broadcasting on Thursday afternoons at 3:45 from the hot, cramped studios of WHN in the Loew's State Theatre building three-and-a-half blocks down Broadway, and soon thereafter directly from the Hollywood. Marcus Loew, in a countermove to radio's threat of giving the public "something for nothing," had recently purchased WHN to promote his star performers and his theatres. The magnate put his publicist Nils T. Granlund in charge, and it was "N.T.G." who had the brilliant idea to run "wires" – heavy-duty cables similar to phone lines – to clubs in nearby Times Square and broadcast live entertainment from the bawdy Prohibition-era scene. WHN "started broadcasting us every night after two a.m." Ellington later recalled.<sup>1</sup> The Washingtonians spent five "seasons" at the Hollywood, which after two mysterious fires and a raid by Treasury agents, had re-opened as Club Kentucky. During those four years, pre-assembled radio sets became better and cheaper, and sales of radio equipment increased four-fold. Radio was big business. Through a series of law suits and mergers, David Sarnoff built the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) into a behemoth. By 1926, RCA's subsidiary, the National Broadcasting Company (NBC), had two coast-to-coast networks, Red and Blue, with over sixty stations combined, carrying programming relayed from WEAf and WJZ in New York.

Ellington's professional breakthrough came when he landed the Cotton Club gig, opening on Sunday night, December 4, 1927. "So far as we were concerned," wrote Ellington in his autobiography, "the engagement at the Cotton Club was of the utmost significance, because as a result of its radio wire we were heard nationally and internationally." That exposure, however, did not happen overnight. For his first fourteen months at the Cotton Club, Ellington's orchestra broadcast over that same WHN, a local station with an intermittent signal in the New York area. Their "rhythmic indigo modulations" aired at midnight on Mondays, and at 7:00 pm on Wednesdays and Fridays for dinner-time programs. The broadcasts helped Ellington earn a reputation, and connect with his African American audience that was largely restricted from entering the Cotton Club (except for a few celebrities seated off to the side). "Immediately after our early broadcasts, about six or seven in the evening, we'd run on down to the corner of 131st and Seventh, where all the musicians used to hang out," recalled Harry Carney. "In the beginning, a lot of them made us feel like crying, they were so critical."<sup>2</sup>

The Cotton Club broadcasts went national on February 4, 1929 with Ellington's debut on WABC, the clear-channel home station of the new Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS). Owner William S. Paley, challenging NBC, was recruiting the hottest entertainment to entice stations to join his upstart network. At the recommendation of Ted Husing, a popular sports announcer and Cotton Club patron, Paley hired Ellington. Duke Ellington's Cotton Club Band was carried over many of CBS's 46 stations at dinner time, 6:30 pm on Mondays and Thursdays, and late night, 11:00 pm Wednesdays. Listening in was self-described "headset hound" Dorris Campbell of New Hampshire, who wrote, "the Ellingtons are clever, capable, versatile musicians...they operate after the fashion of [boxer Jack] Dempsey...aggressive, instinctively colorful, with a powerful if sometimes awkward grace – and *what a punch!* ... I for one have never caught another thing on anybody's wavelength to approach it."<sup>3</sup>

Ellington's exposure went up another notch when he switched to NBC in September of 1930. The change may have been due to NBC's corporate cross-ownership of the RKO, the film studio which would release an Amos 'n' Andy movie that fall, *Check and Double Check*, in which Ellington and his orchestra made a heavily promoted appearance, and Victor Records, for which Ellington would record the film's hits, *Old Man Blues* and *Three Little Words*. The dinner time broadcasts went away, but NBC offered more stations, and more prominent stations, than CBS. By the time Ellington left the Cotton Club in February of 1931 his late-night programs had won him a huge following. Duke's radio fans stormed theatres in Chicago, Detroit, Omaha, Minneapolis, Des Moines, and Denver as Duke opened an extended tour, presaging a lifetime on the road.

In an endless schedule of "one-nighters" at dance halls and road houses, often in the middle of nowhere, and short theatre engagements of up to one week, the most desirable gigs were "locations," venues that offered long term bookings, respite from the travel, and most importantly, radio remotes. Ellington opened an important war-time engagement at the Hurricane, on April 4, 1943. In an oft-quoted passage in Richard Boyer's "The Hot Bach" profile in the *New Yorker*, Ellington "lost \$18,000 ... on a six-month engagement at the Hurricane in 1943, but he figured that it was a good investment because of the Broadway address and the free radio time and

publicity." Ellington played return engagements at the Hurricane in 1944, and again in 1945, when the night club, located in the second story of the Brill Building, re-opened as the Zanzibar. The Hurricane/Zanzibar broadcasts are worthy of their own series of re-issues, and thanks to Storyville, comprise a sub-set to the *Duke Ellington Treasury Series*. By 1941, relatively affordable Sears Silvertone home recorders were available, and they became especially popular for capturing the latest music off the radio during the 1942-44 recording ban. The amount of surviving airchecks proliferates, and we get to enjoy the Hurricane broadcasts from several nights per week.

Many of today's listeners, including this writer, value radio broadcasts for their spontaneity, energy, and relaxed manner that came from not having to be perfect. The goal was impact. "The recording music," Ellington told a reporter, "must be sold in the first thirty seconds, while the radio music must be sold in the last thirty seconds of the piece."<sup>4</sup> Ellington paid special attention to the quality of his broadcasts as he courted friendships with the announcers, studied the placement of microphones and instruments, and constructed fifteen-minute and half-hour sets that flowed like his later suites.

Despite Ellington's broadcast skills, his critical recognition as an artist, and his band's broad appeal to both black and white audiences, he was unable to land a radio sponsor, and was only heard on "sustaining" broadcasts – programs offered by the networks commercial-free, mostly in late-night hours, as a public service. That changed in 1945. In what *Billboard* termed a "sensash break," the United States Treasury Department hired Ellington for a weekly radio series promoting the sales of War Bonds. Broadcasts began on April 7 from the 400 Club in New York, and continued Saturday afternoons from various locations through November 24, aired coast-to-coast over ABC, the former Blue network recently divested from NBC. It was a "sensash break" for posterity, too, that the broadcasts were all recorded, on 16 inch, 33 and 1/3 rpm discs by the Armed Forces Radio Service, who would slice and dice and repackage the recordings for use by the military. Ellington's extensive broadcasting series was ultimately a recording project that preserved a comprehensive survey of the great composer/bandleader's work at an important time.

"Radio Show of the Year," declared *Metronome's* Leonard Feather. The journalist, a sometime Ellington employee, lauded Duke's selection from his "wealth of great music," a blend of his classic "works of the past," with "large chunks...from his large-scale writing," and even "pops [that] took on new life." Now in the twentieth of what will be twenty-four volumes of the *Duke Ellington Treasury Shows*, issued in their entirety on Storyville, these recordings prove the broadcasts worthy of Feather's praise for "weeks and weeks of inspiring music, beautifully delivered, beautifully produced."<sup>5</sup>

#### THE 1946 BAND

Duke Ellington's Saturday *Treasury Shows* resumed on April 13, 1946, from San Antonio, Texas. During the four-and-a-half month hiatus, his band had been through a few changes, and soon went through another. Otto Hardwick, an original Washingtonian, walked off the stand of the Howard Theatre during the week of April 19. His replacement, 34-year-old Russell Procope, would fill his chair for the second half of Ellington's career, right up until Ellington's passing 28 years later. Procope took over on alto sax, played clarinet, and led the great reed section of Johnny Hodges, Harry Carney, Jimmy Hamilton, and Al Sears. Trumpeter Rex Stewart, like Hardwick *sui generis*, had departed the band for good in December of 1945; in the meantime, the trumpet section had swelled to six pieces as Ray Nance returned from leading his own small band. Shelton Hemphill played lead in a group that variously included Taft Jordan, Cat Anderson, Francis Williams, and Reunald Jones. The trombones were bolstered by a fourth man. Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton felt that he had recovered sufficiently from his stroke the previous fall, and rejoined the section that included his replacement, Wilbur de Paris, along with Lawrence Brown and Claude Jones. In line with the post-war trend for swing bands, this band was brassy and powerful.

This brass-heavy edition of Duke Ellington and his Famous Orchestra sounded nimble and not muddy, and that was due in no small part to bassist extraordinaire Oscar Pettiford. His crisp articulation, immaculate timing, rhythmic attack, and powerful personality characterize this band. "O.P." was a driving force in the development of bebop, and his stature as one of the all time greatest jazz musicians was recognized in his selection to *Down Beat* magazine's Hall of Fame in 2009.

Pettiford's vision went beyond bop and even jazz, and to use Ellington's highest compliment, was "beyond category." Composer David Amram, like Pettiford fluent in jazz, classical, and native sources of world music, played French horn in Pettiford's 1956-59 big band, and considered O.P. "a perfect musician."<sup>6</sup>

Pettiford, born in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, on September 30, 1922, is generally seen as the successor to Jimmie Blanton in developing the role of the jazz bassist to that of a horn-like soloist. His similarities to Blanton are many. Pettiford's mother was Choctaw and his father African American and Cherokee; Blanton had Cherokee ancestry on both sides of his family. Both of their mothers were music teachers, and both played in family bands; Blanton, that of his mother Gertrude; Pettiford, of his father Doc. Both died young: Blanton from tuberculosis at the age of 23 in 1942; Pettiford, from a rare virus at the age of 37 in 1960.

The Pettiford family moved to Minneapolis when Oscar was three years old. It was in that city that Pettiford first encountered Duke: "One night Duke Ellington heard me at an after-hours jam session and asked me to join the band. This was before Blanton. But I was 14 or 15 and breaking the law as it was."<sup>7</sup> (Duke Ellington and his Orchestra played the Orpheum Theatre in Minneapolis the week of September 7-13, 1937, just weeks before Pettiford's fifteenth birthday.) Pettiford recalled meeting – and jamming with – Blanton on a later occasion: "I did get to hear Blanton when I was 17. When I heard him, it was love at first sight. I was just with him one night. We had a head-cutting contest right away. Our approaches were a lot alike. If he stayed alive, I'd probably still be in Minneapolis."<sup>8</sup>

Pettiford was encouraged by bassist/arranger Adolphus Alsbrook of Minneapolis, who had worked briefly with Ellington (one month, sometime shortly before Blanton's arrival). Alsbrook assured him that he was good enough to make it in New York, and Pettiford would accept a job offer from Charlie Barnet when the bandleader came through town. Soon after arriving in New York, Pettiford became a fixture at Minton's Playhouse, the uptown club where the rhythmic and harmonic innovations that would become known as "bebop" were brewing. Jazz producer and writer Ira Gitler has credited Pettiford with co-leading, along with Dizzy Gillespie, "the first organized modern group on Fifty-Second Street" at the Onyx Club in December of 1943.<sup>9</sup>

Pettiford participated in several seminal bebop records of 1944 and 1945, both as a sideman and a leader, including *Max is Making Wax* by Oscar Pettiford's Eighteen All-Stars, a studio big band.

Ellington, always on the lookout for the best musicians, summoned Pettiford when bassist Junior Raglin gave notice in October of 1945 (to join Ray Nance's small group). O.P. was busy leading a trio at Lew Le Roy's Swanee Inn in Hollywood at the time, so Duke had to wait. Lloyd Trotman subbed until Pettiford returned to New York from the West Coast. Pettiford first recorded with Ellington on the November 17 *Treasury Show* (DETS-16 on Storyville). He later confessed, "It had always been my ambition to play with Duke."<sup>10</sup>

2015 marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of William "Billy" Strayhorn, and this CD serves as a tribute to his genius. Strayhorn's contributions to the Ellington organization cannot be overstated, and are in evidence on the four broadcasts heard here:

- A brilliant composer in his own right, including the band's radio theme;
- Arranger of both Ellington compositions and popular tunes;
- Alternate pianist and band leader, often charged with rehearsing the band;
- Accompanist and coach for the vocalists; and
- According to Ellington, "the eyes in the back of my head."

## CD1

**WJZ and ABC radio network broadcast, rehearsal hall of the Paramount Theatre, 4:00–4:30 pm, EDT, June 1, 1946.**

Ellington was in the final day of an engagement that had opened at the 3,500 seat Paramount Theatre at 44th Street and Broadway on May 8, sharing the stage with the Mills Brothers and a movie. Although *Variety* praised the Ellington Orchestra, which "continues to dish out its unique arrangements,"<sup>11</sup> a performance was panned by Barbara Hodgkins in *Metronome*: "I never thought I'd yawn through Ellington."<sup>12</sup>

The band must have been saving its best for this broadcast, which finds them in top form.

Ellington and Pettiford's intro and the first eight bars of **Take the "A" Train** are all it takes to identify the band, and Duke gets right down to business.

Ellington opens the program in a gentle manner, with Johnny Hodges's alto saxophone on the exquisite **A Flower is a Lovesome Thing**. Billy Strayhorn is at the piano for his composition. He wrote lyrics, too, although not recorded until 1965 by Ella Fitzgerald. But who needs words when you've got the lyricism of Johnny Hodges?

Strayhorn remains at the piano for the program's first **Bond Promo**. "Duke is getting very smooth at selling those bonds," commented Leonard Feather.<sup>13</sup> Duke's pitches, although read from a script, ring of sincerity. In Ellington's mind, "freedom" would come through hard work and thrift.

Ellington uses the *Treasury Shows* to sell his recent Victor recordings, too. **Main Stem**, recorded on July 28, 1942 as *Swing Shifters Swing*, and programmed frequently on the 1943 Hurricane broadcasts as *Altitude*, was not released until January 28, 1944. The stratospheric blues opens with interplay between the band and the trumpeter, Rex Stewart in the original. Luciano Massagli and Giovanni Volonté's *The New Desor* list Taft Jordan as the trumpeter on this performance. It is thought that Jordan "took over all the solos" of Stewart, notes writer Graham Colombé, but "the player is neither Nance nor Jordan, and there's a note not quite cleanly played toward the end of the solo," which Colombé identifies as a marker for Cat Anderson.<sup>14</sup> Hodges, Nanton, Sears, and Brown also solo in this outstanding Ellington composition.

It's time for the first vocal of the afternoon, Bing Crosby's "sentimental" 1932 hit, **A Ghost of a Chance**. Victor Young wrote the music, and Ned Washington along with Crosby himself, are credited with the lyrics. Little is known about vocalist Marion Cox. According to *Billboard's* review of a June 13 performance at Chicago's Oriental Theatre, Cox was "being given a trial run with the ork"<sup>15</sup> following the illness of Joya

Sherrill. Evidently Marion passed the audition, as she remained in the orchestra for about one year, although the exact duration of her tenure is unclear. A review of a January 1947 performance praised the "tall and striking gal."<sup>16</sup>

In the next **Bond Promo**, the announcer asks Duke about his love of desserts and trains, and his telephone with a "25 foot cord," as revealed in the June issue of *Seventeen* magazine. "Jazz Takes the Duke Seriously," surprisingly, is not a superficial teen-oriented feature, but a perceptive portrait of the artist. "My band has musical freedom," Duke told journalist Dixon Gayer. "That's what I want. It also has personal freedom."<sup>17</sup>

**In a Jam** dates back to 1936. Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton reprises his original solo, with the orchestra mimicking clarinetist Barney Bigard's original filigrees; Hodges and Jordan share the second chorus; Al Sears follows, taking Ben Webster's solo (Webster was recording with Ellington before he had joined the organization); and Cat Anderson closes.

Ellington shifts his varied program to a commercial offering well-suited for his male vocalist, Al Hibbler. **I'm Just a Lucky So and So** was an Ellington collaboration with the prolific lyricist Mack David. Hibbler had first approached Ellington for a job when the band came through his native Arkansas, likely in July of 1935. Ellington recalled that their "paths crossed several times" before he finally hired him in May of 1943 when he suddenly needed a vocalist early in the first Hurricane engagement. Hibbler became the band's "Black Sinatra." Hodges states the melody as Hibbler doesn't come in until the second chorus. Lawrence Brown solos.

**Stomp, Look, and Listen** is an Ellington composition that dates back to the 1944 season at the Hurricane and was heard frequently on broadcasts, but not recorded in a studio until November of 1947 for Columbia. Taft Jordan, and likely Cat Anderson (suggests Colombé) trade fours, followed by Hamilton and Brown, then Anderson, clearly recognizable by his high notes, takes it up and out.

Harold Arlen, a friend of Ellington's since the 1933 debut of his *Stormy Weather* at the Cotton Club, wrote the music of **Come Rain or Come Shine** for the 1945 film,

*Out of this World*. When lyricist Johnny Mercer suggested the opening line, "I'm going to love you, like nobody's loved you," Arlen followed with, "come Hell or high water."<sup>18</sup> The vocalist is Kay Davis, holder of a masters degree from the prestigious conservatory of Northwestern University near Chicago. Billy Strayhorn accompanies her and solos.

Ellington plays a few bars, then Strayhorn takes over at the piano for a last **Bond Promo**. Urging the radio listeners to invest in bonds in order to purchase technological marvels of the future, Ellington asks, "Do you remember your first crystal radio set?" Ostensibly written by Ellington's son Mercer during the ASCAP ban in 1941 and first recorded in a Johnny Hodges small group session, **Things Ain't What They Used to Be** quickly became the band's closing radio theme.

**WHN broadcast, from the Hurricane, NYC, 10:30-10:55 pm, September 10, 1943.**

We join the broadcast in progress for George Gershwin's **Summertime** from *Porgy and Bess*. Although Ellington, rarely critical in public, had dismissed Gershwin's patronizing opera, he knew a good melody (and a hit) when he heard one. Al Hibbler is the vocalist. Junior Raglin took over Jimmie Blanton's feature for bass, **Jack the Bear**, upon joining the band in November of 1941. Jimmy Hamilton, who had joined the band just a few months prior to this broadcast, is heard on clarinet, followed by Nance, Carney, and Nanton.

**I Didn't Know About You**, announced as *Sentimental Lady*, and also known as *Home*, is an Ellington tune first recorded for Victor on July 28, 1942, three days prior to the recording ban. Hodges and Nance are the soloists. Ellington's **In a Mellow Tone**, like *Jack the Bear*, dates to 1940. Hodges and Nance are featured again.

**Rockin' in Rhythm** is a 1930 chestnut that stayed in the Ellington book up until his death in 1974, increasing in tempo through the years. The announcer calls out the "pep section:" Ray Nance, Joe Nanton, and Wallace Jones. Carney (on clarinet) and Nanton reprise their original solos.

## CD2

**WJZ and ABC radio network broadcast, WEEU Studio, Reading, PA, 4:00-4:45 pm, June 8, 1946.**

Between the Saturdays, Ellington played a triumphant hometown concert at the Watergate, an open-air, mixed-race venue in still-segregated Washington, DC, witnessed by 7,000 paid attendees, plus an estimated 2,000 boaters on the Potomac.<sup>19</sup> The band played Annapolis the next night, then headed north. En route to a Saturday night dance engagement at Lakeside Park in the mountains of central Pennsylvania, they stopped in the city of Reading that afternoon for their next *Treasury Broadcast*.

As always, the broadcast opens with Strayhorn's **Take the "A" Train**. As the previous Saturday, Ellington slows the beat. The gently swaying **Mood to be Wooped**, with Johnny Hodges's alto both sensual and sexual, matched the post-war mood of a country in the early days of the Baby Boom, fulfilling a post-war "pent-up demand" for more than automobiles and washing machines. Ellington's next **Bond Promo** extols the benefits of investing three dollars and getting back four in ten years' time, a steady if unspectacular 3.33 per cent annual rate of return.

A "bounce," Strayhorn's minor key masterpiece **Johnny Come Lately** follows. Recorded the same day as *Main Stem* and released on its flip side, *Johnny Come Lately* lives in the lower register; Pettiford's bass work prods Brown's trombone, Carney's baritone sax, and the stand-out work of Nanton on his muted trombone. "My music...must be played by this band, and solos must be played by the men for whom they are written," Ellington told *Seventeen* magazine. "Whenever a soloist leaves the band I go through the library weeding out arrangements in which he was featured." Although this was not always true, *Johnny Come Lately* would drop out of the band book following the untimely loss of Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton, whose death from a heart attack on August 7, eight weeks after this broadcast, stunned the band. *Johnny Come Lately* enjoyed brief revivals in the 50s with Quentin "Butter" Jackson, and again in the 60s with Buster Cooper, attempting the near impossible task of filling Nanton's dramatic role. This is the last recorded version with Tricky Sam. "His sound was a voice unique," wrote Rex Stewart. "Tricky possessed the gift of



communication that is the essence of any music. Others tried to copy his plunger style...but none has been able to capture his sound and nuance."<sup>20</sup>

The next two tunes are their only recorded performances by Duke Ellington. Strayhorn returns to the piano for Irving Berlin's **They Say It's Wonderful** with vocalist Kay Davis. Harry Carney's baritone sax is well suited for a Strayhorn arrangement of **Strange Love** by Miklos Rozsa and Eddie Heyman from the 1946 film noir, *The Strange Love of Martha Ivers*. It's a gem unique to this CD.

Jimmy Hamilton's clarinet is featured on Fats Waller and Andy Razaf's **Honeysuckle Rose**. The brilliance of Billy Strayhorn's arranging is again in evidence on this jazz evergreen; compare this arrangement, first heard at Ellington's second Carnegie Hall concert on December 11, 1943, with a relatively pedestrian performance at Fargo on November 7, 1940. (Both recordings are available on Storyville).

The swing era was winding down and vocalists were beginning to predominate American popular music. Accordingly, Ellington programmed the *Treasury Shows* with many vocals, and here is Al Hibbler on Harry Nemo's **Don't Take Your Love from Me**. Hodges solos between vocal segments. Strayhorn plays a lovely coda on his arrangement, and stays at the piano for the next **Bond Promo**.

Duke Ellington's relationship with Buck Clayton goes back to Clayton's appearance as an actor in the 1934 film, *Murder at the Vanities*. Best known for his trumpet work with the Count Basie Orchestra, Clayton was also a composer of note, including **Blues on the Double**. It's announced as a "jump tune," jump music being a trend of the era that would soon be labeled "rhythm and blues," then "rock and roll." It's all blues. Hodges reminds the listener that he's not just a balladeer, but still excels at hard blues. The powerful trumpet solo that follows, Colomé suggests, is by Francis Williams, followed by Sears, then Anderson.

**Take the "A" Train** is heard both as a closer, evidently for a local break on the half hour, then as an opener. Newspaper radio logs indicate this Treasury Broadcast went an extra fifteen minutes, to the benefit of both contemporary listeners and

ourselves, as the additional time is allotted for some of Ellington's "serious work," two excerpts from his magnum opus *Black, Brown, and Beige*, debuted at Carnegie Hall on January 23, 1943. Ellington, although stung by the mixed reviews, re-worked *BB&B*, and used the *Treasury Shows* to keep it before a public that was barely familiar with the work. Only a truncated 20 minute version of *BB&B* was recorded for Victor in 1944; the original 53 minute performance would not be commercially available on record until 1977. On the *Treasury Shows* we hear beautifully realized versions of **Come Sunday** and **Light**, the two moving themes of the second half of the *Black*.

**Come Sunday** is the best known theme from *Black, Brown, and Beige*. It was recorded with the great Mahalia Jackson in 1958, then incorporated into Ellington's *Sacred Concerts* in the 60s. Johnny Hodges states the familiar melody on alto. Juan Tizol's original trombone parts were thought to have been taken by Claude Jones, but Colomé suggests that we're hearing Lawrence Brown. Ray Nance's violin also plays a prominent role.

Taft Jordan plays the intro to **Light**, performed by Harold Baker at Carnegie Hall. Oscar Pettiford especially enjoyed Ellington's concert pieces and plays brilliantly here. *Light* was not included in the 1944 studio recording. Perhaps *Black, Brown, and Beige* can be best appreciated as a work in progress?

Billy Strayhorn moves to the piano for our next **Bond Promo**, then supports Marion Cox on his arrangement of **Lover Man**, a tune closely identified with Billie Holiday. Cox recorded both *Lover Man* and *Ghost of a Chance* (heard on the June 1 broadcast) with Ellington for Victor on August 26, but unfortunately for her, the recordings were not issued until decades later in a 1970s compilation.

The multi-talented Ray Nance is heard as a vocalist on (**Otto Make That**) **Riff Staccato**. First recorded for Victor on May 1, 1945, this is the last recording of the jive tune. Sears and Jordan are also heard.

**Mood Indigo** was one of the Ellington's most popular tunes, and discographies show close to 500 recordings; this version sounds inspired and must rank near the

top. Shelton Hemphill's trumpet, Carney's clarinet, and Nanton's trombone bring the plaintive melody to life, with the distinctive blend of colors that made Ellington's Cotton Club broadcasts so captivating back in 1930. Pettiford's immaculate work is outstanding.

A final **Bond Promo** leads into the closer, Ellington's up-tempo **Riff 'n' Drill**. Ellington plays one of his great intros, as Pettiford demonstrates his authority to state that "the 4/4 beat, the basic time of jazz, came from the Native American."<sup>21</sup> Brown, Hodges, and then Anderson bring the broadcast to an exciting conclusion that leaves the listener looking ahead to the next radio concert. The series would take a short break, returning on July 6 from the Million Dollar Theatre in Los Angeles, coming up in Volume 21 of the *Duke Ellington Treasury Shows*.

**WHN broadcast, from the Hurricane, NYC, 8:00-8:30 pm, September 7, 1943.**

Again thanks to Storyville founder Karl Emil Knudsen's desire to let no space on these CDs go to waste, we head back to 1943, to the final weeks of Ellington's six-month engagement at the Hurricane. **Johnny Come Lately** is joined midway through Nanton's solo, followed by Carney pairing with Ellington, in this piece presented at the first Carnegie concert the previous January as *Stomp*. Likewise, the opening of *Beige*, **Emancipation Celebration**, benefits from the band's familiarity and comfort with *BB&B* since its debut eight months earlier. The band was reportedly so nervous prior to the concert at Carnegie Hall that Ellington's personal physician was passing out tranquilizers. Rex Stewart, on hiatus in order to work with his friend guitarist Brick Fleagle, is absent. Jordan takes Stewart's role in the interplay with Nanton and Raglin in this meditation on the aftermath of slavery.

Much of Betty Roché's first tenure with the band coincided with the recording ban, so we are fortunate to hear the outstanding vocalist on many of the Hurricane broadcasts. She swings on Ellington's delightful **Go Away Blues**. Hodges's blues proficiency is featured on **Don't Get Around Much Anymore**, originally recorded in 1940 as *Never No Lament*.

The broadcast, and this CD, closes with a touch of **Things Ain't What They Used**

**to Be**. Who can fault Ellington for a wistful look back? The world was changing and new challenges lie ahead. Big bands were dying off like the dinosaurs, but Ellington transcended *Swing* and its era. Television was in its developmental stage and by the early 1950s would supersede radio. Duke Ellington would outlive the reign of the medium that he had so well mastered.

Ken Steiner  
Seattle, WA USA  
April 29, 2015

© Ken Steiner 2015

Notes dedicated to the memory of Sjef Hoefsmit.  
Thanks to research colleagues Roger Boyes, Graham Colombé, Art Farrar, Matthias Heyman, Steven Lasker, David Palmquist, and Carl Woideck.  
Special thanks to Ira and Mary Jo Gitler.

## NOTES

1. "Jazz as I Have Seen It," *Swing*, June 1940, p21.
2. Dance, Stanley, *The World of Duke Ellington*, DaCapo, 1970, p75.
3. "A Jazz Impression," *Radio Digest*, Nov. 1929, p110.
4. "Ellington's Boys Play Each Show Different Way," *Seattle Times*, Dec. 17, 1941.
5. Feather, Leonard, "Radio Show of the Year," *Metronome*, Jan. 1946.
6. *Remembering Jim Pepper, Oscar Pettiford, Floyd Red Crow Westerman*; www.ochcom.org/pdf/anram.pdf
7. Hentoff, Nat, "An Oscar," *Down Beat*, Mar. 21, 1957, p17.
8. *Ibid*.
9. Gitler, Ira, *The Masters of Bebop*, DaCapo, 1966, p155.
10. Hentoff, p17.
11. Stal, "House Reviews, Paramount, N.Y.," *Variety*, May 15, 1946, p63.
12. Hoelgins, "Time A-Wasted," *Metronome*, July 1946.
13. Feather, "Duke Back on Air," *Metronome*, May 1946.
14. Colombé, Graham, emails to the author, Feb. 17 and 18, 2015.
15. Mike, "Oriental, Chi." *Variety*, June 19, 1946, p50.
16. Riley, John W., "Stage Show, RKO-Boston Theatre, Duke Ellington," *Boston Globe*, Jan. 10, 1947.
17. Gayer, Dixon, "Jazz Takes the Duke Seriously," *Seventeen*, June 1946, p24.
18. Jablonski, Edward, Harold Arlen: *Happy with the Blues*, DaCapo, 1961, p149.
19. "9,000 Hear Duke Ellington's Jazz Concert at Water Gate," *Evening Star*, July 7, 1946.
20. Stewart, Rex, *Jazz Masters of the Thirties*, DaCapo, 1972, p104.
21. Hoefler, George, "Oscar Pettiford," *Down Beat*, June 2, 1966, p25.

## About The Treasury Shows

In April 1945 the war was ending in Europe but a large expensive operation lay ahead to complete the victory in the Pacific. Along with the "Mighty Seventh War Loan" the United States Treasury Department contracted Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra to perform a series of public service broadcasts over the Blue Network on Saturdays. These 55 minute programs would give Ellington a wide choice of material to perform including his older work; new instrumentals and pop tunes and his extended works as well. The series was launched on April 7th, 1945 while the band was performing at the 400 Restaurant in New York City. These wonderful broadcasts ran through November 1945 and picked up again in April 1946 through early October. It is something of a miracle that these precious broadcasts survived all these years and are in such good quality as well. We've also included some interesting broadcasts from 1943 through 1954 where Duke performed for the Treasury Department, radio remotes from New York's New Zanzibar & Birdland and those broadcast from Meadowbrook Gardens in Culver City, California and the Blue Note in Chicago.

So sit back and enjoy these Ducal highlights from over fifty years ago.

*Jerry Valburn*

**D.E.T.S**  
903 9020

D.E.T.S.

DUKE ELLINGTON TREASURY SHOWS, VOL. 20

903 9020

# DUKE ELLINGTON

## THE TREASURY SHOWS VOLUME 20

### CD1

1. Take The "A" Train 0:40
2. A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing 3:29
3. Duke Ellington Bond Promo 0:58
4. Main Stem 3:19
5. A Ghost Of A Chance 3:14
6. Interview with Duke Ellington 0:39
7. In A Jam 3:22
8. I'm Just A Lucky So And So 3:48
9. Stomp, Look And Listen 3:45
10. Come Rain Or Come Shine 3:18
11. Duke Ellington Bond Promo 1:29
12. Things Ain't What They Used To Be 2:07
13. Summertime 2:57
14. Jack The Bear 3:33
15. Sentimental Lady 3:19
16. In A Mellotone 3:07
17. Rockin' In Rhythm 4:23

Total time: 47:34

Liner notes: Ken Steiner.



Made in EU  
D.E.T.S 903 9020

### CD2

1. Take The "A" Train 0:43
2. Mood To Be Wooed 4:47
3. Duke Ellington Bond Promo 1:03
4. Johnny Come Lately 2:40
5. They Say It's Wonderful 2:45
6. Strange Love 2:44
7. Honeysuckle Rose 3:17
8. Don't Take Your Love From Me 4:44
9. Duke Ellington Bond Promo 1:04
10. Blue On The Double 4:40
11. Take The "A" Train 0:36
12. Take The "A" Train 0:51
13. Come Sunday 6:27
14. Light 6:09
15. Duke Ellington Bond Promo 1:01
16. Lover Man 3:23
17. Riff Staccato 3:10
18. Mood Indigo 4:39
19. Duke Ellington Bond Promo 1:08
20. Riff 'N' Drill 2:17
21. Johnny Come Lately 1:32
22. Emancipation Celebration 2:25
23. Go Away Blues 2:06
24. Don't Get Around Much Anymore 2:13
25. Things Ain't What They Used To Be 1:00

Total time: 67:45

[www.storyvillerecords.com](http://www.storyvillerecords.com)

©© 2015 Storyville Records

D.E.T.S.

DUKE ELLINGTON TREASURY SHOWS, VOL. 20

903 9020