

VOL.21

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA • THE TREASURY SHOWS



D.E.T.S.

2
CD SET

CD 1

1. Take The "A" Train (Billy Strayhorn) 0:47
2. Caravan (Duke Ellington-Juan Tizol-Irving Mills) 4:02
3. Sono (Duke Ellington) 5:21
4. Duke Ellington Bond Promo 1:10
5. Laughin' On The Outside (Bernie Wayne-Ben Raleigh) 3:42
6. Take The "A" Train (Billy Strayhorn) 0:23
7. Take The "A" Train (Billy Strayhorn) 0:41
8. The Blues (Duke Ellington) 7:32
9. Teardrops In The Rain (Cat Anderson-Duke Ellington) 3:02
10. I'm Just A Lucky So And So (Duke Ellington- Mack David) 3:51
11. Duke Ellington Bond Promo 1:15
12. Metronome All Out (Duke Ellington-Billy Strayhorn) 4:45
13. Just A-Sittin' And A-Rockin' (Duke Ellington-Billy Strayhorn-Lee Gaines) 3:48
14. One O'Clock Jump (Count Basie-Eddie Durham) 4:14
15. Things Ain't What They Used To Be (Duke Ellington-Mercer Ellington-Don George) 3:18
16. Ko-Ko (Duke Ellington) 2:31
17. Take The "A" Train (Billy Strayhorn) 0:59

Total time: 51:26

Personnel: 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) Russell Procope (cl,as) Johnny Hodges (as) Al Sears (ts) Harry Carney (bs,cl,bcl) Duke Ellington (p) Billy Strayhorn (p) Fred Guy (g) Oscar Pettiford (b) Sonny Greer (dr) Kay Davis, Al Hibbler (vo).

Track 1-14 Broadcast, Million Dollar Theatre, Los Angeles, July 6, 1946

Personnel: Rex Stewart, Wallace Jones (tp) Ray Nance (tp,vln) Joe Nanton, Lawrence Brown (tb) Juan Tizol (vtb) Chauncey Houghton (cl, ts) Johnny Hodges (as,ss) Otto Hardwick (as) Ben Webster (ts) Harry Carney (bs,as,cl) Duke Ellington (p) Fred Guy (g) Junior Raglin (b) Sonny Greer (dr).

Track 15-17 CBS Broadcast Lakeside Park, El Patio Ballroom, Denver, July 14, 1942

CD 2

1. Take The "A" Train (Billy Strayhorn) 0:50
2. Jump For Joy (Duke Ellington-Paul Webster-Sid Kuller) 3:17
3. A Gathering In A Clearing (Duke Ellington-Cat Anderson) 2:50
4. Duke Ellington Bond Promo 1:10
5. Come Rain Or Come Shine (Johnny Mercer-Harold Arlen) 3:13
6. Suddenly It Jumped (Duke Ellington) 2:47
7. Take The "A" Train (Billy Strayhorn) 0:20
8. Medley (Duke Ellington) Total: 7:40
Black And Tan Fantasy; In A Sentimental Mood; Mood Indigo; I'm Beginning To See The Light; Sophisticated Lady; Caravan; Solitude; I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart / Don't Get Around Much Anymore.
9. Duke Ellington Bond Promo 1:13
10. Passion Flower (Billy Strayhorn) 4:06
11. Just You, Just Me (Raymond W. Klages-Jesse Greer) 3:57
12. You Don't Love Me No More (Duke Ellington) 4:00
13. Unbooted Character (Duke Ellington) 4:22
14. Duke Ellington Bond Promo 1:03
15. Cotton Tail (Duke Ellington) 3:20
16. Take The "A" Train (Billy Strayhorn) 2:31
17. Swing Shifters Swing (Duke Ellington) 3:09
18. Altitude (Main Stem) (Duke Ellington) 3:05

Total time: 53:09

Personnel: Shelton Hemphill, Taft Jordan, Francis Williams, Cat Anderson, Harold Baker (tp) Ray Nance (tp,vln,vo) Lawrence Brown, Claude Jones, Wilbur DeParis (tb) Jimmy Hamilton (ts,cl) Russell Procope (as,cl) Johnny Hodges (as) Al Sears (ts) Harry Carney (bs,cl,bcl) Duke Ellington (p) Fred Guy (g) Oscar Pettiford (b) Sonny Greer (dr) Kay Davis, Al Hibbler (vo)

Track 1-15 radio broadcast, Orpheum Theatre, San Diego, July 27, 1946

Personnel: Rex Stewart, Wallace Jones (tp) Ray Nance (tp,vln) Joe Nanton, Juan Tizol, Lawrence Brown (tb) Barney Bigard (cl) Johnny Hodges (as,ss) Otto Hardwick (as) Ben Webster (ts) Harry Carney (bs,cl,as) Duke Ellington (p) Fred Guy (g) Junior Raglin (b) Sonny Greer (dr)

Track 16-18 radio broadcast, Trianon Ballroom, South Gate, California . May 2, 1942

Following their Treasury Show #40 broadcast of June 8, 1946, the Ellington Orchestra went back on the road. A week was spent in Chicago at the Oriental Theatre, and a tour of Canada lasted through June 26. The band then returned to Los Angeles and the Million Dollar Theater for a weeklong engagement.

The July 2 opening was covered by Billboard Magazine in their July 13 issue. They shared billing with a tap duo, Business Men of Rhythm, and did standing room only business. The unnamed writer noted that most numbers had ticket holders "yelling and stomping for more," but admitted that Kay Davis' "jazz-tone painting" on Transblucency left the "jive addicts" bewildered.

The July 6 Treasury Show was broadcast from the Million Dollar Theater. Hank Weaver introduces "the Duke himself," and the familiar, rousing theme **Take The "A" Train** confirms his presence.

Caravan was the third of four titles delivered by Barney Bigard and His Jazzopators on December 19, 1936. Bigard was only a nominal leader, since Duke Ellington was there to head the small group. The key member proved to be Juan Tizol, whose slow and exotic valve trombone birthed a jazz standard and the biggest hit ever for Irving Mills' Variety label.

The **Date With The Duke** performance, though, more closely resembles the May 11, 1945 RCA recording. Cat Anderson plays the squawking trumpet in the style of Cootie Williams. Lawrence Brown assumes Tizol's duties, and Jimmy Hamilton stands in for Bigard's clarinet. Ray Nance adds a dexterous violin solo, which generates a wave of applause from the audience.

Sono was one of several numbers debuted by Ellington at his January 4, 1946 Carnegie Hall concert, along with **Rugged Romeo**, **Transblucency**, **Suburbanite**, and the **Tonal Group of Rhapsoditti, Fugueaditti, and Jam-A-Ditty**. From that selection, only **Sono** appears in this duo of Treasury Shows. It was recorded in the studio just once, for Capital Radio Transcriptions. The present performance is its last. It is a Harry Carney feature often (and aptly) compared with **Frustration**. The latter title lasted in the book much longer, perhaps because it was shorter, or simply because it had a more evocative title.

Although radio announcers read the war bond scripts during the April 1945 Treasury

Shows, the sponsors apparently decided that they were too slick for the duty. Veteran stage announcer Duke Ellington took over the responsibility on the fifth broadcast, and continued in that role thereafter. He apparently read the scripts cold, and almost always stumbled at some point, but no one seemed to mind. Here, he extols the virtues of Junior converting his allowance to U.S. Savings stamps and bonds, which, after all, are better for his teeth than candy.

Laughing On The Outside was a top ten **Billboard** pop hit in May 1946 for three different singers: Dinah Shore, Andy Russell, and Billy Williams, the latter backed by the Sammy Kaye Orchestra. Both Ellington Orchestra recordings of the title were Treasury Show performances. It was a Johnny Hodges feature on May 18, 1946, and here it becomes a soulful vocal performance by Al Hibbler, supported by Ray Nance on violin. Announcer Hank Weaver works in an obscure reference to Pagliacci, an 1892 Italian opera by Ruggero Leoncavallo.

An all-too brief rhythm trio version of **Take The "A" Train** takes us to the station break. When the broadcast resumes, the full band reprises the theme.

Black, Brown and Beige was arguably the most ambitious work of Duke Ellington's career. Composed for introduction at his first Carnegie Hall concert on January 23, 1943, the effort met with a mixed reception, especially from those more interested in swing than social commentary. But excerpts from the jazz symphony proved popular, perhaps none more so than **The Blues**, taken from the the third part of **Brown**.

During the 1940s, Bette Roché, Joya Sherrill, Marie Ellington, and Kay Davis all tried their hand on the pensive number. Sherrill is heard on the December 1944 RCA studio recording, probably the orchestra's best rendition of the title. Sherrill left the band early in 1946 to marry a serviceman, and Davis inherited her vocal duties on the present title, which also includes languid solos by Al Sears and Lawrence Brown.

El Gato eventually became the most played Cat Anderson composition in the band book. But in 1946, when he was still billed as William Anderson, that honor belonged to **Teardrops In The Rain**. The title was only recorded once by the Ellington Orchestra in a studio, for World Broadcast System radio transcriptions, but it was performed in eight different Treasury Shows.

It's no wonder why it was a band staple for two years. The band really swings, and

when it's time for Anderson's solo, he shows off high note pyrotechnics that few if any other trumpeters could match. Al Sears unleashes a mighty tenor sax solo, then the band is briefly reduced to a rhythm trio featuring Pettiford's bass and the Duke on piano. To close the number, the full orchestra reverses the introductory themes.

I'm Just A Lucky So And So was an early success for Tin Pan Alley songwriter Mack David, who contributed the lyrics to the Ellington composition. It was recorded for RCA on November 26, 1945, and although it never charted, it promptly became a standard, and was performed on seven different Treasury Shows, as well as the January 4, 1946 Carnegie Hall concert.

Perhaps more than any other number, it demonstrates the luxury of riches that the Ellington Orchestra enjoyed during 1946: one of the best big band singers in Al Hibbler, the best alto sax player in Johnny Hodges, and the best trombonist in Lawrence Brown. Not to mention Ray Nance, Jimmy Hamilton, Cat Anderson, Al Sears, and Oscar Pettiford. Could Duke Ellington himself have been the lucky so-and-so?

One of Billy Strayhorn's less well-known duties with Ellington was to comp for his savings bond promos. His agreeable accompaniment reduced Ellington's burden of breathing life into the stale scripts. This time around, the topic is a horticulturist hobbyist whose fair prizes are made possible by his safe and shrewd investment in U.S. Bonds.

In 1945, the Duke Ellington Orchestra placed highly in the jazz rankings of three influential magazines. Ellington returned the favor by composing (with Billy Strayhorn and Johnny Hodges) the **Magazine Suite**, which included **Downbeat Shuffle**, **Esquire Swank**, and **Metronome All Out**.

The latter lasted longest in the band book, and was usually paired with **Frankie And Johnny**, to lend epic and dramatic flair to that classic American romantic tragedy. Here, **Metronome All Out** stands alone, and has three comparatively quiet sections, respectively featuring the Duke on piano, Jimmy Hamilton on clarinet, and Oscar Pettiford on bass. These are followed by passages from the full orchestra, each of which builds to a crescendo. The audience is highly appreciative.

During Hamilton's solo, he is twice requested by Duke to "hold it," the better to demonstrate Hamilton's mastery of circular breathing. Harry Carney also acquired the skill, as documented in many performances of **Sophisticated Lady** over the years.

Among the gems that emerged from the Jump For Joy musical, **Just A-Sittin' And A-Rockin'** seemed tailor-made for boisterous vocal talents of Ray Nance. But Nance, who rejoined the band in April 1946 after a six-month absence, never sang on the number until the April 20, 1946 Treasury Show. Prior to that, it had been an instrumental, and spent three years out of the band book until resurrected by Lee Gaines' lyrics.

The number became quite popular, and appeared in nine episodes of *Date With The Duke*, although this marked its final such performance, despite the gasps of anticipation from the audience when its title is announced. Its history is reminiscent of **Just Squeeze Me**, which began as the instrumental **Subtle Slough** and fell out of the book for three years before its 1952 revival with lyrics and a Ray Nance vocal.

But **Just A-Sittin' And A-Rockin'** is not all about Nance and his fictional romantic woes. Indeed, Al Sears' enjoys a rich tenor sax solo that nearly occupies more air time than Nance's vocal.

Ardent Ellington collector Jerry Valburn used to opine that the Ellington Orchestra's cover versions of **One O'Clock Jump** never swung like Count Basie's, but I beg to differ. I prefer this performance to Basie's original Decca recording. In particular, Lawrence Brown's vigorous solo is a standout. He is sandwiched between Al Sears and Johnny Hodges, and the trio is followed by Taft Jordan's exulting trumpet. Alas, the announcer eventually breaks in to spoil the fun and end the Treasury Show broadcast.

Continuing a Storyville tradition, airchecks from Ellington remotes of the 1940s are provided as extras to the Treasury Shows. Since these were home recordings made by big band enthusiasts instead of professionals employed by the Armed Forces Radio Service, the sound quality is less than ideal. But given the transient nature of radio airwaves, we are fortunate to have them for posterity.

We roll back the years to July 14, 1942, and the Ellington Orchestra performs at the El Patio Ballroom at Lakeside Park in Denver, Colorado via a CBS radio broadcast. The band has recently lost Barney Bigard and Herb Jeffries, who remained on the West Coast following a lengthy tour of that region. Bigard's duties on clarinet and tenor sax are assumed by Chauncey Houghton.

Poor Mercer Ellington never could get any respect, as demonstrated by the stories that surround the origins of **Things Ain't What They Used To Be**. One tale goes that

Johnny Hodges devised the melody, but lost his rights to the composition to Mercer in a card game. Then there's the theory that all of Mercer's songwriter credits from 1941 (which also include **Blue Serge**, **Moon Mist**, and **Jumpin' Punkins**) were because of his father's membership in ASCAP, which, due to a radio boycott, kept him from playing his songs on airwaves that year. Perhaps Mercer should have asked for his money back from Julliard.

Regardless of the tune's actual composer, there's no doubt that both musicians and audiences enjoyed its familiar, repetitive melody and "jam session" feel. This is its second-earliest surviving performance, following its debut on a July 3, 1941 small group recording session for RCA's Bluebird subsidiary. Although well known as a Johnny Hodges feature, here he has only the first solo, followed by Lawrence Brown on trombone and Ray Nance on muted trumpet.

Ko-Ko ranks among the highest regarded of all the Duke Ellington compositions from the Blanton-Webster era. It is among those titles that explain why Ellington didn't want to be pigeonholed as a jazz composer or bandleader. He wanted his horizons to remain "beyond category." The brass section sounds ominous, as if stormy clouds are forming, and we hear Junior Raglin slapping the double bass when the horns fall silent. But the number relies heavily on "Tricky Sam" Norton's protesting trombone, and it was among the titles shelved upon his stroke. Some years later, it returned, with first Tyree Glenn and then Quentin Jackson supplying the key solo, but they say that you can't go home again, and no, it wasn't the same.

The Ellington Orchestra theme **Take The "A" Train** appropriately closes the short aircheck, and it can be enjoyed despite the inopportune voiceover by the loquacious radio announcer.

Following the Treasury Show #41 broadcast from Los Angeles, the Duke Ellington Orchestra remained in California until September 3. There were two additional dates at the Million Dollar Theater, then three days were spent in the studio recording for RCA and Capital Transcriptions. By this time, Harold "Shorty" Baker replaced Reunald Jones in the trumpet section, beginning the third and longest of his five stints in the orchestra.

Late on July 19, or perhaps early July 20, the tour bus left Los Angeles for the six-hour drive north to the Scraggs Hotel in San Francisco. The next morning, Joe "Tricky Sam"

Nanton failed to appear on the bus, and was found dead in his hotel room.

Nanton was the first Ellington Orchestra member to pass while actively with the band, although Bubber Miley, Arthur Whetsel, and Jimmy Blanton had all left the band in failing health, and died not long after. Freddy Jenkins had been forced to leave the band twice due to a lung ailment, but recovered both times.

Nanton was only 42, but had been partially paralyzed on his left side since suffering a stroke in November 1945. He made enough of a recovery to rejoin the orchestra on March 28, 1946, but his solo responsibilities went elsewhere. **Black And Tan Fantasy**, a Nanton feature since its first studio recording, was apparently not played by the orchestra during this time.

Nanton had spent nearly half his life in the Ellington Orchestra. In 1926, he replaced Charlie Irviss, who was himself a master of the growling trombone. Toby Hardwick, one of the orchestra's earliest members, called Nanton "Tricky Sam" because "he could always do with one hand what someone else did with two." The nickname stuck.

Nanton, the son of immigrants from the West Indies, was mentored by Bubber Miley, and soon developed a plaintive "ya-ya" sound that no one else was later able to replicate, although Quentin Jackson, who joined the band in 1948, came closest. Nanton's effective range was limited, but Ellington liked what he heard, and his talents as a composer and arranger made memorable use of Nanton's skills on dozens of different titles.

Perhaps because of Nanton's death, there was no Treasury Show broadcast on July 20. Nanton's chair remained vacant until Tyree Glenn was brought in May 1947. Nonetheless, the orchestra had three trombonists, since Wilbur De Paris had joined Lawrence Brown and Claude Jones following Nanton's stroke the previous year.

The band played in Vallejo on Sunday, July 21, then journeyed down the coast to San Diego for a week's engagement at the Orpheum Theater, the site of the Treasury Show #42 ABC radio broadcast on July 27. Hank Weaver reprises his role as announcer as Billy Strayhorn's heralded **Take The "A" Train** theme opens the show.

The musical **Jump For Joy** was conceived at a Hollywood Hills house party in February 1941. It was intended as a landmark statement from the black perspective, but despite the Ellington Orchestra playing from the pit, the show closed after a run of less

than three months. Its lasting legacy was its songbook, which included the standard **I Got It Bad** and two numbers also played often by Ellington, the title song and **Just A-Sittin' And A-Rockin'**.

The song **Jump For Joy** was recorded for RCA twice on the same day, July 2, 1941, alternatively with Ivie Anderson and Herb Jeffries on vocals. Both left the band a year later, leaving the colorful Ray Nance as the obvious choice to assume vocal duties.

Tricky Sam Nanton traditionally played the first solos, and it appears that the title was put on the shelf following his stroke, awaiting his hoped-for full recovery. After his death, the number returned to the book, and Lawrence Brown took over his solo responsibility.

Announcer Hank Weaver refers to Ray Nance as a "trumpet boy," which must have made band members wince. But the show must go on, and Nance delivers the hip lyrics with inimitable flair. We hear Johnny Hodges on the alto, then the full orchestra rises for the finale.

Cat Anderson was best known for his high note prowess, but he could also handle a mute and plunger, as demonstrated on **A Gatherin' In A Clearin'**. This was the first of only two Treasury Show appearances of the title, despite its recent July 10, 1946 commercial recording for RCA. This performance departs from the other versions by omitting Al Sears' sax during the introduction, although his mighty tenor can still be heard prior to Anderson's final solo. Relative to the RCA master, some of the majesty has been lost, but this is no reflection on Anderson, who plays very well.

Billy Strayhorn is uncharacteristically absent, and Duke Ellington must soldier on unaccompanied in his delivery of trite savings bond promos. Duke tells the story of young wage earner Nancy and her steady accumulation of U.S. Savings bonds.

Come Rain Or Come Shine was a Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer composition for the 1946 Broadway musical *St. Louis Woman*. Its pledge of faithful devotion proved more durable than the musical, and it was popularized on the radio by Dinah Shore, although she never charted with the title. Kay Davis sang it on the June 1, 1946 Date With the Duke program, and Ellington thought enough of it to record it in the studio for Capital Transcriptions on July 11. This is its second Treasury Show performance, and would turn up a third and final time on August 31. Davis' delivery separates solos by

Wilbur De Paris on trombone and Ray Nance on trumpet.

Suddenly It Jumped is among those remarkable Ellington swingers that he devised so regularly during the early-to-mid 1940s. Aside from two rhythm trio sections that feature bassist Oscar Pettiford, and a few brief Jimmy Hamilton solos, the star here is Taft Jordan. His solos indeed jump, although not quite to the heights of the scale that Cat Anderson could reach. The number was finally recorded for RCA on July 9, 1946, in the interim between the two present Treasury Shows. Before that, it had an auspicious debut at the December 11, 1941 Carnegie Hall concert, made the cut for the Second Esquire All-American concert, and was played in three different Treasury Shows.

A station break ensues, and the show returns with the Ducal theme **Take The "A" Train**, but the mood shifts promptly from ebullient to mournful as we begin the Ellington **Medley**, sometimes referred to as the "Dreaded Medley" by his swing adherents. It debuted at the December 11, 1943, Carnegie Hall concert, and worked into the program standards anticipated by the audience. Since it was partly played by Ellington on piano, it gave the brass brief opportunities to rest their chops. During broadcasts, the number of titles also generated royalties for the perennially cash-challenged orchestra.

Duke opens the Medley with a spoken tribute to the late, great Nanton, "who contributed so much to the identifying characteristics and style of this band," as the band plays **Black And Tan Fantasy** in the background. It was the first appearance of the famous early Ducal masterpiece (and Nanton feature) in the Ellington discography since August 1945, prior to Nanton's stroke.

Ellington dedicates the Medley to Nanton, and states its numbers were "among his favorites," but the ones played are usual for the Medley, aside from the addition of *I'm Beginning to See the Light*. That song was never a Nanton feature, but it was a big hit in early 1945 for both Ellington and (especially) Harry James. As the studio audience recognizes the tune, they applaud, and the title remained in the Medley for the rest of Ellington's career.

A second, and equally long-lasting, change to the Medley is the addition of **Don't Get Around Much Anymore to I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart**. Duke begins with the latter on piano, then the sax section joins in with former. Despite both titles played at once, it all works out.

Duke Ellington often told the story that **I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart** was rejected by the Cotton Club management for his 1938 show at the legendary nightclub, in favor of **Swingtime In Honolulu**. While that tune remained obscure, **I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart** promptly became a standard.

Don't Get Around Much Anymore was composed as a countermelody to **I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart**. It was initially recorded in May 1940 by the Ellington Orchestra as the instrumental **Never No Lament**. Later, it was rechristened with its more familiar title as it topped the Billboard rhythm and blues charts in 1943 for both the Ink Spots and the Ellington Orchestra, the latter featuring Al Hibbler on vocals.

Other titles in the Medley include **In A Sentimental Mood**, **Mood Indigo**, **Sophisticated Lady**, **Caravan**, and **Solitude**. All were hits for Ellington during the 1930s, with **Mood Indigo** perhaps most important of all, since, for the first time, it brought international attention to Duke Ellington as a composer. The portentous **Fanfare** precedes **In A Sentimental Mood**, and first appears in the Ellington discography during a January 9, 1940 concert in Boston, as the introduction to **Tootin' Through The Roof**.

Again without Billy Strayhorn on piano, Duke is obliged to read a bond promo script. The topic is new father Joe, who celebrates Junior's arrival by stocking his college fund with automatic paycheck deductions for U.S. Bonds.

Billy Strayhorn was adept at composing features for Johnny Hodges, including **Blood Count** from his final hospital bed. **Passion Flower** first appeared a productive July 3, 1941 small group session, the same one that also introduced **Things Ain't What They Used To Be** and **Just Squeeze Me**. After a four-year slumber, **Passion Flower** was revived for the first Date With The Duke show, and remained in the book for the rest of Hodges' career with the band. Hodges' mastery of the alto sax spellbinded audiences, and you could hear a pin drop as he soars up and slides down the scale.

A real swinger, **Just You, Just Me** is a jazz standard introduced in the 1929 musical film *Marianne*. Although its origins were not Ellingtonian, the present performance undeniably is. Jimmy Hamilton provides the two melodic tenor sax solos, Taft Jordan does his best Rex Stewart imitation on trumpet, and ever-reliable Harry Carney joins in on baritone sax.

By 1946, most of the big bands had endured a commercial decline, and vocalists such

as Frank Sinatra became the dominant force in the record business. The trend also impacted the Ellington Orchestra, as Al Hibbler established himself as the band's hitmaker. During 1944 and 1945, the talented blind singer charted highly on Billboard's Harlem Hit Parade with **Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me**, **Don't You Know I Care**, and **I Ain't Got Nothin' But The Blues**.

A strictly Ellington composition, **You Don't Love Me No More** was another effort in that vein. It was recorded for RCA on July 10, 1946, then for Capital Radio Transcriptions on July 11, and was plugged on the July 27 and August 24 Treasury Shows. It never charted, but Hibbler would later have another hit with the band, **Don't Be So Mean To Baby**.

The gabby announcer's description of an **Unbooted Character** is someone who's "sorta square and ain't goin' nowhere." Bill Flemons later elaborated that an **Unbooted Character** is "'one without shoes, barefoot, as many persons were while working on the plantations of the Deep South." Those impoverished sharecroppers were looked down upon by city slickers, but they had personalities of their own, as evoked by the Duke Ellington composition.

The title first appears in the Ducal discography in 1942 airchecks from the Hotel Sherman in Chicago. It only appears on one other Treasury Show, that of September 8, 1945, but made it into the November 23, 1946 Carnegie Hall concert, and was revived nearly ten years later on the **Historically Speaking** Bethlehem LP. Its only other studio recording was for Capital Radio Transcriptions on July 16, 1946, within two weeks of the present performance.

It is a highlight of the Treasury Show, although the band seems to enjoy it more than the austere audience. We hear from Lawrence Brown's sterling trombone and Jimmy Hamilton's icy clarinet, then Taft Jordan and Shorty Baker hold a sparkling conversation with their trumpets.

Duke is obliged to read another savings bond script, this time concerning a man whose purchase of a house with green shutters was funded by his stash of U.S. Bonds. The scripts had become more pedestrian since 1945, when they were pitched to bring Johnny back home from deadly island hopping in the Pacific.

With chord changes based on George Gershwin's **I Got Rhythm**, **Cotton Tail** be-

came the most famous feature written for Ben Webster during his first stint with the orchestra. After Webster's 1943 exit, it remained in the book until 1972, but the present performance is the only surviving one from the year 1946. By that time, the band had three tenor sax players: Al Sears, Jimmy Hamilton, and Russell Procope. It is Sears that attempts the legendary Webster solo, preceded briefly by Ray Nance on trumpet and followed by Harry Carney and Duke Ellington, who both approximate their solos from the original May 4, 1940 RCA recording. It's all great fun until the announcer breaks in to close this episode of **Your Saturday Date With The Duke**.

We now turn the clock back a few years to May 2, 1942, and an aircheck of an MBS broadcast from the Trianon Ballroom at 2800 Firestone Boulevard in the Los Angeles suburb of South Gate, California. The Trianon Ballroom opened in 1932 as Topsy's, and was rechristened in May 1945, simultaneous with a 24-day engagement there by the Ellington Orchestra. The band returned on April 2, 1942, and remained at the nightclub through May 12.

The aircheck provides us with the only full version of **Take The "A" Train** on the present double CD. Barney Bigard can be heard on clarinet, then the familiar Ray Nance solos take over. The Strayhorn composition had the power to make people happy, one reason why it remained the Ellington Orchestra theme for one third of a century.

Duke Ellington's own **Swing Shifters Swing** appears only twice in his discography, and both are airchecks. It shows up again as a July 24, 1942 Chicago broadcast from the Hotel Sherman, by which time the legendary Barney Bigard had been replaced by the less easily remembered Chauncey Houghton. The present version does feature Bigard, as well as Rex Stewart, Lawrence Brown, and Ben Webster.

Swing Shifters Swing has a simple and repetitive but pleasing melody, and one wonders whether it would have been commercially recorded if not for Bigard's exit and the unfortunate AFRS recording ban, which kicked in on August 1, 1942.

The June 26, 1942 RCA master of the driving and swinging **Main Stem** (alternatively titled **Altitude** in its early days) was the final Ellington Orchestra recording to top the Billboard Harlem Hit Parade, later known as their Rhythm & Blues chart. This aircheck precedes the studio recording, and is in fact the earliest surviving performance. It closely resembles the RCA version, and both have a Barney Bigard solo. Most performances

(including four in **Date With The Duke shows**) instead have Jimmy Hamilton on clarinet. Bigard's moment in the spotlight is preceded by solos from Johnny Hodges and Rex Stewart, and he is followed by Tricky Sam, Ben Webster, and Lawrence Brown, with the last two especially effective.

Brian Koller, February 2016

Brian Koller is a rare coin cataloger and former telecom software engineer who has been a collector of Ellington LPs and CDs for longer than he would care to remember. He maintains a discography of recommended Ellington recordings at <http://filmsgrad-ed.com>.

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Duke Ellington in Person, Mercer Ellington with Stanley Dance, 1978.

Washington Duke Ellington Society newsletter, Bill Flemons, April 2001.

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 9021

DUKE ELLINGTON

THE TREASURY SHOWS VOLUME 21

CD 1

1. TAKE THE "A" TRAIN (Billy Strayhorn) 0:47
2. CARAVAN 4:02
(Duke Ellington-Juan Tizol-Irving Mills)
3. SONO (Duke Ellington) 5:21
4. DUKE ELLINGTON BOND PROMO 1:10
5. LAUGHIN' ON THE OUTSIDE 3:42
(Bernie Wayne-Ben Raleigh)
6. TAKE THE "A" TRAIN (Billy Strayhorn) 0:23
7. TAKE THE "A" TRAIN (Billy Strayhorn) 0:41
8. THE BLUES (Duke Ellington) 7:32
9. TEARDROPS IN THE RAIN 3:02
(Cat Anderson-Duke Ellington)
10. I'M JUST A LUCKY SO AND SO 3:51
(Duke Ellington- Mack David)
11. DUKE ELLINGTON BOND PROMO 1:15
12. METRONOME ALL OUT 4:45
(Duke Ellington-Billy Strayhorn)
13. JUST A-SITTIN' AND A-ROCKIN' 3:48
(Duke Ellington-Billy Strayhorn-Lee Gaines)
14. ONE O'CLOCK JUMP 4:14
(Count Basie-Eddie Durham)
15. THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE 3:18
(Duke Ellington - Mercer Ellington - Don George)
16. KO-KO (Duke Ellington) 2:31
17. TAKE THE "A" TRAIN (Billy Strayhorn) 0:59

Total time: 51:26



Booklet notes Brian Koller

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CD 2

1. TAKE THE "A" TRAIN (Billy Strayhorn) 0:50
2. JUMP FOR JOY 3:17
(Duke Ellington-Paul Webster Sid Kuller)
3. A GATHERING IN A CLEARING 2:50
(Duke Ellington - Cat Anderson)
4. DUKE ELLINGTON BOND PROMO 1:10
5. COME RAIN OR COME SHINE 3:13
(Johnny Mercer-Harold Arlen)
6. SUDDENLY IT JUMPED (Duke Ellington) 2:47
7. TAKE THE "A" TRAIN (Billy Strayhorn) 0:20
8. MEDLEY (Duke Ellington) TOTAL: 7:40
Black And Tan Fantasy; In A Sentimental Mood;
Mood Indigo; I'm Beginning To See The Light;
Sophisticated Lady; Caravan; Solitude; I Let A Song
Go Out Of My Heart/Don't Get Around Much Anymore.
9. DUKE ELLINGTON BOND PROMO 1:13
10. PASSION FLOWER (BILLY STRAYHORN) 4:06
11. JUST YOU, JUST ME 3:57
(Raymond W. Klages-Jesse Greer)
12. YOU DON'T LOVE ME NO MORE 4:00
(Duke Ellington)
13. UNBOOTED CHARACTER (Duke Ellington) 4:22
14. DUKE ELLINGTON BOND PROMO 1:03
15. COTTON TAIL (Duke Ellington) 3:20
16. TAKE THE "A" TRAIN (Billy Strayhorn) 2:31
17. SWING SHIFTERS SWING (Duke Ellington) 3:09
18. ALTITUDE (MAIN STEM) (Duke Ellington) 3:05

Total time: 53:09

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