

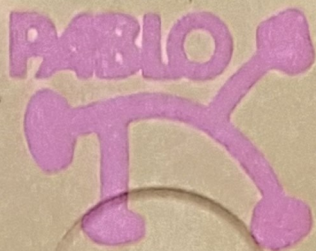
*Up in  
Duke's workshop—*

**DUKE ELLINGTON & HIS ORCHESTRA**



2310-815





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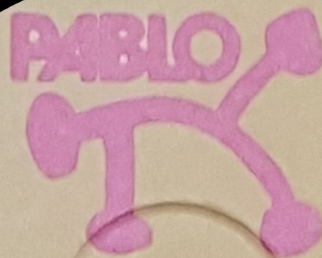
33 TOURS

STEREO



Duke Ellington  
« up in Duke's workshop »

1. BLEM (Ellington) 6'55
2. GOOF (Ellington) 3'03
3. DICK (Ellington) 2'57
4. LOVE IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER  
(L. Gensler-Leo Rubini) 4'23
5. BATEAU (Ellington) 5'18



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B

33 TOURS

STEREO



Duke Ellington  
« up in Duke's workshop »

1. WANDERLUST (Ellington) 6'26
2. NEO CREOLE (Ellington) 3'52
3. BLACK BUTTERFLY (Ellington) 3'40
4. MENDOZA (Ellington) 5'43

# Go in Duke's workshop — DUKE ELLINGTON & HIS ORCHESTRA

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Duke Ellington was always aware that many musicians had the bitter experience of writing music they never heard played, and he would half-humorously explain that he afforded the luxury of his band only because it enabled him to hear what they had written overnight. "In that," wrote Michel Petrin, the French critic, "he resembled those German princes who supported Bach or Mozart. He was, at one and the same time, Bach, Mozart and the prince."

There was a serious element behind Ellington's mocking banter. For him, the essential was the sound of music in performance, not music on paper. He would always listen intently to what was played in the recording studio, frequently putting hard on the lobes of his ears in order to hear better. Modifications in tempo and voicing might be made on the spot, or the music might be taken home for revision. Occasionally, it was taken home and torn up, and sometimes, if it were music others had written, it was permanently mislaid. His own new works were often rehearsed during public performances, but the workshop where new creations emerged for the first time and were shaped was, more often than not, the recording studio, especially when the session was being conducted at the own expense.

However serious his intentions, it sometimes happened that he arrived with little prepared music. His muse, perhaps, had deserted him during the night. In that case, much impromptu music ensued and that session resolved into a loose kind of jam session. But it was by no means fruitless, for he was listening at the time for novel ideas expressed by his men in the course of their spontaneous improvisation. And it is worth emphasizing that he attached great importance to the spontaneous, often dismissing as "mechanical" the subsequent takes that were more polished. The initial spark, or "catching the joy as it flies" in Blake's words, meant a great deal to him, and he was adept in evaluating it.

Like *The Intimate Ellington* (Pablo 2310-787), this album consists of excerpts from what he used to refer to as "the stockpile," an accumulation of recordings made in studios all around the U.S., as well as in Canada and Europe.

BLEM, like several of the other titles, is in this instance a vehicle for expert jamming, the soloists being Harold Ashby, Norris Turney, Money Johnson, Paul Gonsalves, Tyree Glenn, "Geewiz" Minerva (piccolo), and Ashby again. Dick features Wild Bill Davis, Harry Carney and the explosive Malcolm Taylor. *Mendoza* was named for an Argentine city whose string the second Latin-American tour. It left vivid memories, but whether of shame or pride was always difficult to

determine. By all reports the musicians did more than justice to the hospitality the place provided, and while the solos and ensembles are accurately portrayed in the solos of Wild Bill Davis, Russell Procope, Booby Wood, Paul Gonsalves and Canadian Fred Stone, only they can—or could—say.

*Love Is Just Around the Corner*, the maestro believed, was arranged by Jimmy Hilliard. It had been in the book a long time when the recording was made. Cootie Williams took a fancy to the number and performed it nightly for several months. He developed an interpretation that invariably paid tribute to Louis Armstrong while investing the customary optimistic character of the piece with new stresses and dynamics. As the tension mounts, he seems to be asking a question: What if, after all, it is not just love around the corner? What if some unimaginable contradiction lurks there? But then the corner is turned, and love is there, and the solo subsides contentedly. Because of an intellectual Wild Bill Davis arrangement, Ellington liked it at once, and not merely because the title gave him an opportunity to air his French, "Ah, le garçon en bateau!" he exclaimed before beating off the time, no doubt with the original title of *Squeeze Me* on his mind. His rapport with Davis is well illustrated here and it is obvious that they both enjoyed themselves.

Included on the second side are three venerable numbers that were revised for Ellington's background score to *Change of Mind*, a film of not inconsiderable merit that got short shrift on the movie circuit, perhaps because racials found the subject indecise. (It involved the implanting of a white man's brain in a black man's body.) As the band prepared itself for the somewhat somber *Wanderlust*, the leader explained its significance in the film: "We are now approaching Souville," he said. Cootie Williams (like Harold Ashby) are the protagonists. *Neo-Creole* is a theme derived from Ellington's first extended work, *Creole Rhapsody*, and for the purpose of the film context it was given boogaloo treatment, and Ashby and Turney the responsibility for the solos. *Black Butterfly*, a *chef d'oeuvre* from 1936, might well be said to improve on the original, if only because of Johnny Hodges's beautiful solo. The clarinet is by the versatile and very gifted Turney.

During the period in which these recordings were made, the band suffered an irremediable loss when Johnny Hodges died. Nobody was more conscious of what that meant than Ellington. The inevitable torques and definitive styles on which he had so long depended were departing one by one. It was a saddening retrospect, but he did not dwell on it. As always,

he was resourceful, and he made the best of the talents available to him. There was always consolation in Harry Carney's deep, steady sax, but he also turned in on himself more, as these informal sessions and live performances showed. It is remarkable that during the last decade of his life, and despite recurrent arthritic problems in his hands, he played more piano with more zest and authority than ever before. The relaxed, confident power displayed on *Goof* is a good example of this. He is simply taking up the space that he will probably later allot to one of the horns, and making no big deal of it, but the solo is much more than a filler—it is completely convincing and it carries the band with it.

The tours of Latin America, the Middle and Far East were probably most responsible for what is here called an increasingly "tropical" element in his piano playing. It echoed impressions received on his travels, but it also complemented the style in which drummer Rufus Jones excelled. Because he did not always succeed in getting what he wanted from Jones, whose conception was so different from that of his much-admired predecessor, Sam Woodyard, Ellington often found it better to go to meet him on the common ground of "exotic" rhythm. To some it sounded "contemporary," even as an individual echo of the widespread Brazilian idiom, but more important to Ellington was the fact that it jelled rhythmically. A half-century of experience had equipped him to cope with conditions in anybody's jungle.

STANLEY DANCE  
 author of *The World of Duke Ellington* (Charles Scribner's Sons).

#### Personnel:

(A) Duke Ellington, piano; Cootie Williams, Willie Cook, trumpets; Benny Green, Benny Powell, trombones; Russell Procope, Paul Gonsalves, Harold Ashby, Harry Carney, reeds; Paul Kondziela, bass; Rufus Jones, drums, 23 April 1969.  
 (B) Duke Ellington, piano; Cootie Williams, Willie Cook, Cal Anderson, Jimmy Owens, trumpets; Lawrence Brown, Buster Cooper, Chuck Connors, trombones; Johnny Hodges, Russell Procope, Norris Turney, Paul Gonsalves, Harold Ashby, Harry Carney, reeds; Victor Gaskin, Paul Kondziela, basses; Rufus Jones, drums, 23 May 1969.

(C) As (B), Mercer Ellington and Money Johnson died. Nobody was more conscious of what that meant than Ellington. The inevitable torques and definitive styles on which he had so long depended were departing one by one. It was a saddening retrospect, but he did not dwell on it. As always,

(D) Duke Ellington, piano; Wild Bill Davis, organ; Cootie Williams, Mercer Ellington, Fred Stone, Cal Anderson, trumpets; Booby Wood, Julian Priester,

Chuck Connors, trombones; Russell Procope, Norris Turney, Paul Gonsalves, Harold Ashby, Harry Carney, reeds; Joe Benjamin, bass; Rufus Jones, drums, 15 June 1970.  
 (E) As (D), Money Johnson and Al Rubin replace Mercer Ellington and Fred Stone; Malcolm Taylor replaces Priester, 9 December 1970.

(F) As (E), Mercer Ellington and Eddie Priestner replace Anderson and Rubin, 1 February 1971.

(G) As (F), 3 February 1971.

(H) As (F), Buddy Pearson added to reeds, 29 June 1971.

(I) Duke Ellington, piano; Cootie Williams, Johnny Coles, Mercer Ellington, Money Johnson, trumpets; Tyree Glenn, Vince Prudente, Chuck Connors, trombones; Harold Minerva, Norris Turney, Paul Gonsalves, Harold Ashby, Harry Carney, reeds; Joe Benjamin, bass; Rufus Jones, drums, 8 December 1972. (All sessions recorded in New York City.)

#### Side 1.

1. BLEM (I) (Ellington) Tempo Music, Inc./ASCAP
2. GOOF (H) (Ellington) Tempo Music, Inc./ASCAP
3. DICK (G) (Ellington) Tempo Music, Inc./ASCAP
4. LOVE IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER (F) (Gonsalves/Rubin) Famous Music Corp./ASCAP
5. BATEAU (E) (Ellington) Tempo Music, Inc./ASCAP

#### Side 2.

1. WANDERLUST (A) (Ellington) Tempo Music, Inc./ASCAP
2. NEO-CREOLE (C) (Ellington) Tempo Music, Inc./ASCAP
3. BLACK BUTTERFLY (B) (Ellington) Tempo Music, Inc./ASCAP
4. MENDOZA (D) (Ellington) Tempo Music, Inc./ASCAP

#### Produced by Duke Ellington

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