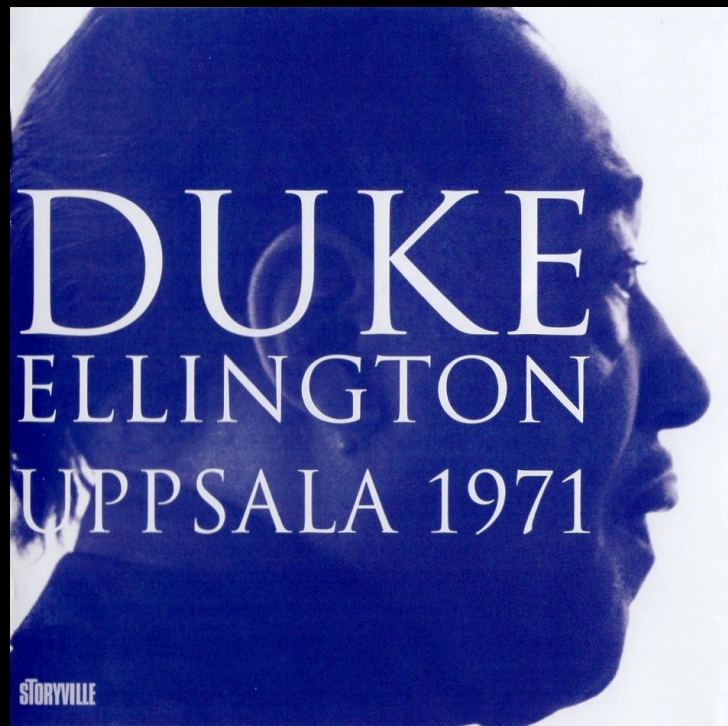


DUKE
ELLINGTON
UPPSALA 1971

STORYVILLE





Duke Ellington Concert, Universitetsaulan, Uppsala, Sweden, Nov. 9, 1971.

In Duke Ellington's tape collection ("The Stockpile") were several tapes with concert recordings of the band's performances on tour. One can only guess whether these tapes were required by Duke for some purpose, or were given to him (or his son Mercer) on the initiative of the concert arrangers. At any rate it was a great delight to find a tape box marked "Ellington - Uppsala 9-11-71" in the collection, containing a tape with a concert at the university town of Uppsala, Sweden on Nov. 9th 1971, the second of two concerts in Uppsala that day. Ellington was on a European tour from the beginning of October to mid November, taking the band through The Soviet Union, England, Belgium, France, The Netherlands, Poland, Germany, Italy, Denmark, Sweden and Spain before leaving Europe for Argentina.

It seems that Sweden has always meant something special to Ellington from the first visit in 1939 to his last concert in Sweden Oct. 28th 1973, only 7 months before his death in May 1974. During his visit to Sweden in 1939 he wrote Serenade to Sweden, as well as an arrangement of a Swedish hit song *I en röd liten stuga* (In A Red Little Cottage). Through the years several Swedish musicians played in the band, notably trombonist Åke Persson and trumpet player Rolf Ericson, and not the least must be mentioned his long co-operation with the extraordinary Swedish singer Alice Babs, who became a close friend of Duke's. Duke Ellington and the band always played well in Sweden, as can be heard on the several recordings made over the years, e.g. "Duke Ellington in Gröna Lund", Malmö 1963 (Storyville 2CD 1038330). Uppsala 1971 is no exception, and the audience not

only got an inspired performance of the repertoire of the time, but also a great presentation of Ellington's 1951 masterpiece "Harlem" (AKA: A Tone Parallel to Harlem). The late Swede Benny Asland (Aaslund) was a pioneer in the creation of complete and thoroughly researched discographies of released and unreleased recordings of the band, and several successful international conferences about Duke have been held in Stockholm through the years. Today the "Duke Ellington Society of Sweden" (DESS), founded in 1993 is still very active worldwide, and since 1994 issuing a printed Bulletin - 4 numbers a year. A DESS website was created in 2016. So Duke Ellington and Sweden is a true mutual love-affair.

Uppsala is situated in the central part of Sweden, just 65 km northwest of Stockholm with almost 150.000 inhabitants. It is a very old and very beautiful town with a cathedral founded in the 13th century, and a university, in fact Sweden's first university, established in 1477. But what is more important to us who listen to music is, that the university's great hall ("Universitetsaulan") also is a great and very beautiful concert hall, at the time often used for accomodating big events, concerts etc., besides the specific university events.

The concert in Uppsala, the second on this Tuesday evening, started with The C Jam Blues as it was usual at that time. C Jam Blues had sort of replaced Take The A Train as the band's signature tune. Norris Turney is heard on the clarinet over the band at the beginning, and Cootie Williams, Paul Gonsalves, Booty Wood, and Russell Procope follow.

Kinda Dukish, Ellington's forceful piano solo precedes Rockin' In Rhythm which is taken at



a breakneck tempo. Rockin' is a deceptibly simple piece when analysed, but pure magic in its entirety and when played by Ellington and his band. The soloists are Bootie Wood on the trombone, and Harry Carney on the clarinet. Money Johnson, Cootie Williams and Bootie Wood are the "pep section", and Eddie Preston is the high note trumpeter at the end.

The next piece at the concert, Happy Reunion is a ballad showpiece for tenorplayer Paul Gonsalves, who is introduced by Ellington as "the hero of the Newport Jazz Festival", even if it is more than 15 years after his iconic marathon solo in *Diminuendo And Crescendo In Blue* in 1956. Paul Gonsalves' performance here shows us what a masterful ballad player he was.

Duke takes the first two choruses in *Take The A Train*, the first one in 3, the second swinging in 4, setting the tempo for the band. Cootie Williams is the trumpet soloist, building on Ray Nance's original solo. Notice how *A Train* with Cootie became a little slower and heavier than the original version featuring Ray Nance.

Norris Turney joined the band in 1969, and was from the start featured both on alto and tenor sax, as well as on clarinet and flute. Turney even played his tenorsax in the trombone section, when a third trombonist was missing. *Checkered Hat* was Norris Turney's tribute on the alto to the late Johnny Hodges (can be heard on *Storyville STCD 8323 "Togo Brava Suite"*) and Fife, heard here, Ellington's composition from 1969, became his feature on the flute until the end of his stay with the band in the beginning of 1973. The piece starts in slow, dreamy 3, and changes to fast 4, with a virtuoso flute performance by Turney.

Satin Doll has had many incarnation since it was first recorded in 1953. Often with a trumpet solo at the beginning, taken here by Cootie Williams, but with different featured soloists as it rolled along. Here Duke himself takes the spotlight in a rather laidback performance.

The suite *The Afro-Eurasian Eclipse* was premiered by Duke about a year before in Monterey, Ca., and recorded in the studio during february 1971. The suite was never performed in its entirety again, but a couple of the parts were used at concerts, notably *Chinoiserie*, which gets an inspired performance here, with Duke's witty introduction, and Harold Ashby's very personal and rhythmically intense tenorsax solo. The first orchestral part sounds inspired by music from the far east, but Ashby's solo is pure jazz.

The center piece of the concert was the band's performance of *A Tone Parallel to Harlem* or *HARLEM* as it was also called. Duke explains his historical intentions behind the piece, a story of the life of African Americans in the part of New York City, called Harlem. Cootie Williams on the trumpet pronounces the word Harlem. Bassist Joe Benjamin has a prominent role in the arrangement. One of the high points of the piece is the slow beautiful spiritual theme introduced by Booty Wood on the trombone. The piece ends rather vehemently, perhaps depicting ways of making the "social significance demands" as Duke puts in his introduction.

After Harlem Duke goes straight into *The Medley*. The arrangement used at concerts in 1971 were rather more satisfactory than other arrangements, because it gave space for more elaborate renditions of some of the tunes. First Duke however states the

themes of some of his most popular songs from the 1930s and 40s on the piano, with a little surprise included, *The Brown Skin Gal* from his 1941 musical *Jump For Joy*. After soloing on *Prelude to a Kiss*, *Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me*, *In A Sentimental Mood*, *Don't You Know I Care* and *The Brown Skin Gal*, he is joined by the rhythm section with the well-recorded bass-playing of Joe Benjamin in *I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart* and a full chorus of *Don't Get Around Much Anymore*.

The melody of *Mood indigo* is played beautifully relaxed by the trio of Russell Procope on the clarinet, Booty Wood on the trombone and Harry Carney on the bass-clarinet. *I'm Beginning to See The Light* is quite a contrast, with a much faster tempo than on its first recording in 1944, and singing by the band and the audience. The next numbers are all given a more elaborate treatment, first *Solitude* with vocals by Tony Watkins, who really sounds to be heartbroken in his loneliness. He has however regained his composure for the 1932 hit *It Don't Mean A Thing, If It Ain't Got That Swing*, the song that became somewhat of a motto for the swing-age. *I Got It Bad* that follows was – like *The Brown Skin Gal* – written for the *Jump For Joy* show. If one remembers Ivie Anderson's 1941 rendition of the song, this version is quite a shock: Grievous, passionate bordering to the tragic, the "torch-singer", as Ellington calls her, Nell Brookshire delivers the message. She is appropriately helped along by the vocal interference of Cootie Williams, who later calms her down again with a masterful chorus on the trumpet. Duke and Harry Carney shines on *Sophisticated Lady*, and Harry Carney's long held note at the end gives room for some good piano playing. One full chorus of Caravan finishes the medley. It is a rather fast version we hear, with some intense playing from Duke and the rhythm section. In his outro

after the medley Duke presents the soloists. Note that he also mentions the Swedish soprano singer Lena Junoff. She did however not sing at the Uppsala concerts. Louis Armstrong had passed away in July that year, and Ellington chose to honour the master by playing the theme of *Things Ain't What They Used To Be* followed by a Louis Armstrong hit song, *Hello Dolly*. Money Johnson is featured on trumpet and vocals with some New Orleans clarinet playing by Russell Procope.

One More Time For The People was written by Duke in the beginning of 1971, with different lyrics, under the title *There's A Place*. This version seems to have been created to make for an agitated encore at concerts, and it works out beautifully in that context. Nell Brookshire and Tony Watkins share the vocals, Harold Ashby adds to the excitement on his tenorsax, and the audience loved it.

To end the evening properly and bring the audience in a more relaxed mood before leaving the concert hall Ellington chose to finish the concert alone at the piano, just accompanied by Joe Benjamin on the bass, playing his own arrangement of Billy Strayhorn's lovely tune *Lotus Blossom*. As Ellington told his friend, the music critic Stanley Dance: "That is what he most liked me to play". Duke Ellington and the band left Uppsala, and already the following night they were to play a concert in Malmö, Sweden, and the day after a concert in Munich, Germany. And so on, and so forth, continuing the European tour. But as we could hear from the performance at the Uppsala concert the band could live up to the challenges, and it was received everywhere with enthusiasm and – love.

Bjarne Busk

PERSONNEL

Cootie Williams, Harold "Money" Johnson, Eddie Preston, Mercer Ellington, John Coles (tp),

Chuck Connors, Malcolm Taylor, Booty Wood (tb),

Russell Procope (as, cl),

Harold "Geezil" Minerve (as, f, pi),

Norris Turney (as, ts, cl, f),

Harold Ashby (ts, cl),

Paul Gonsalves (ts),

Harry Carney (bars, cl, bcl),

Duke Ellington (p),

Joe Benjamin (b),

Rufus Jones (dr),

Lena Junoff, Nell Brookshire, Tony Watkins (vcl)

DUKE ELLINGTON UPPSALA 1971

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA – UPPSALA 1971

- 1 • **C. Jam Blues 3:36** (Duke Ellington)
- 2 • **Kinda Dukish & Rockin' In Rhythm 5:22**
(Duke Ellington, H. Carney, I. Mills – Duke Ellington)
- 3 • **Happy Reunion 4:55** (Duke Ellington)
- 4 • **Take the A Train 5:38** (Billy Strayhorn)
- 5 • **Fife 4:30** (Duke Ellington)
- 6 • **Satin Doll 3:35** (Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn, J. Mercer)
- 7 • **Chinoiserie 6:33** (Duke Ellington)
- 8 • **Harlem 15:07** (Duke Ellington)
- 9 • **Medley 19:11***
- 10 • **Things Ain't What They Used To Be 0:44** (Mercer, Ellington)
- 11 • **Hello Dolly (mj) 3:55** (Jerry Herman)
- 12 • **One More Time For The People (nb, tw) 2:55** (Duke Ellington)
- 13 • **Lotus Blossom 3:04** (Billy Strayhorn)

Total time 79:09

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*PRELUDE TO A KISS (Duke Ellington, Irving Gordon, Irving Mills),
DO NOTHING TILL YOU HEAR FROM ME (Duke Ellington, Keith Russell),
IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD (Duke Ellington, DON'T YOU KNOW I CARE
(Duke Ellington, M. David), THE BROWN SKIN GAL (Duke Ellington, Paul
Francis Webster), I LET A SONG GO OUT OF MY HEART (Duke Ellington,
Francis Webster), Henry (Duke Ellington, John Redmond), GOOD NIGHT TO
ANYONE (Duke Ellington, John Redmond), GOOD NIGHT TO DUKE ELLI-
GTON (Duke Ellington, John Redmond), DON'T GET TOO CLOSE TO ME
(Duke Ellington, John Redmond), I'M BEGINNING TO SEE THE LIGHT (Duke
Ellington, Hodges, H. Harse, D. George), SOLITUDE (Duke Ellington,
Edgar De Lange, Irving Mills), IT DON'T MEAN A THING IF IT AIN'T GOT
THAT SWING (tw) (Duke Ellington, M. Parish, Irving Mills), I GOT IT BAD
AND THAT AIN'T GOOD (tw, cw) (Duke Ellington, Francis Paul Webster),
SOPHISTICATED LADY (Duke Ellington, Irving Mills), CARAVAN
(Duke Ellington, Juan Tizol, Irving Mills)