

WDR BIG.. BAND KÖLN

CONDUCTED BY **BILL DOBBINS**

HEINER WIBERNY, ALTO SAXOPHONE
HARALD ROSENSTEIN, ALTO SAXOPHONE
OLIVIER PETERS, TENOR SAXOPHONE
ROLF RÖMER, TENOR SAXOPHONE
JENS NEUFANG, BARITONE SAXOPHONE

ANDY HADERER, TRUMPET
ROB BRUYNEN, TRUMPET
KLAUS OSTERLOH, TRUMPET
RICK KIEFER, TRUMPET
JOHN MARSHALL, TRUMPET

DAVE HORLER, TROMBONE
HENNING BERG, TROMBONE
BERNT LAUKAMP, TROMBONE
ROY DEUVALL, BASS-TROMBONE

MILAN LULIĆ, GUITAR
FRANK CHASTENIER, PIANO
JOHN GOLDSBY, BASS

MEGUMI TESHIMA-KÁLMÁN, VIOLIN

GUEST MUSICIANS:

PHIL WOODS, ALTO SAXOPHONE, CLARINET
JOHN RILEY, DRUMS



Duke Ellington

Edward Kennedy ("Duke") Ellington was born on April 29, 1899 in Washington, DC. Although he had shown talent in painting as well as in music, he ultimately concentrated his creative energy on music. While growing up in Washington, DC, he took in as much of the musical environment there as he could, from instruction in formal and free piano playing from a neighboring teacher, Marletta Clinkscates, and from the most influential jazz pianists, among them Doc Perry, Louis Thoma, Roscoe Lee, Gertie Wells, Sticky Mac and many others, to informal instruction in composition with Will Marlon Cook. By the time Ellington made his first trip to New York City in 1922, he had already formed the core of what was to eventually become the most unique orchestra in the history of jazz. Members of this early group, "The Washingtonians," included the trumpeter Artie Whetsol, the saxophonist and clarinetist Otto "Toby" Hardwick and the drummer Sonny Greer. Even if Ellington needed several years to make the decisive breakthrough in New York, legendary pianists such as James P. Johnson, Willie "The Lion" Smith and Thomas "Fats" Waller provided him with friendly encouragement as well as musical stimulation. A long

engagement at the Cotton Club in New York from 1927 to 1931 and the productive collaboration with the agent and publisher Irving Mills established an unparalleled international career that, with the exception of a few brief holidays or involuntary lulls, lasted into the Seventies. Beginning with his first stopover in Europe in 1933, where his music had already been well-appreciated and seriously studied, Ellington's international recognition and influence continuously rose. During the last fifty years of his life, he led his orchestra annually on at least one large international tour through countries in Europe and Scandinavia, to South America, Africa, the Far East and Australia.

The program of this last of three Ellington concerts at the MusikTriennale Cologne '94 is focused on the later works (1955 - 1974), but also contains new arrangements of Ellington and Strayhorn titles from the entire period of the Ellington orchestra. These new arrangements are, on the one hand, a personal summary of this concert series that was dedicated to Duke Ellington in this first year of the MusikTriennale. On the other hand, they serve as a platform for the featured guest of the evening, Phil Woods.

John Goldsby, Phil Woods, John Riley & Milan Lulić



Take The Coltrane (1962) originates from an unforgettable Ellington recording with John Coltrane. Half of the pieces on that record were played by Ellington's rhythm section, the other half with Coltrane's. This arrangement was also specially written for this concert and for the guest soloist, Phil Woods.

Certainly one of Ellington's and Strayhorn's strongest extended works from the Sixties, **THE FAR EAST SUITE** (1966) was awarded the "Record of the Year" prize by *DownBeat* magazine. The eight movements, five of which are reproduced here, are noticeably different in mood and thematic content. Ellington and Strayhorn brilliantly succeeded in suggesting oriental moods and musical elements in a very personal style, without merely resorting to a simplistic imitation of eastern scales or rhythms.

Blue Bird Of Delhi, which featured clarinetist Jimmy Hamilton on the original recording, is an autobiographical piece by Strayhorn. During a layover in New Delhi, a blue mynah bird sang in front of his hotel window and gave him the idea for a clarinet theme. Shortly before Strayhorn wanted to leave the hotel, however, the same bird made an unexpectedly

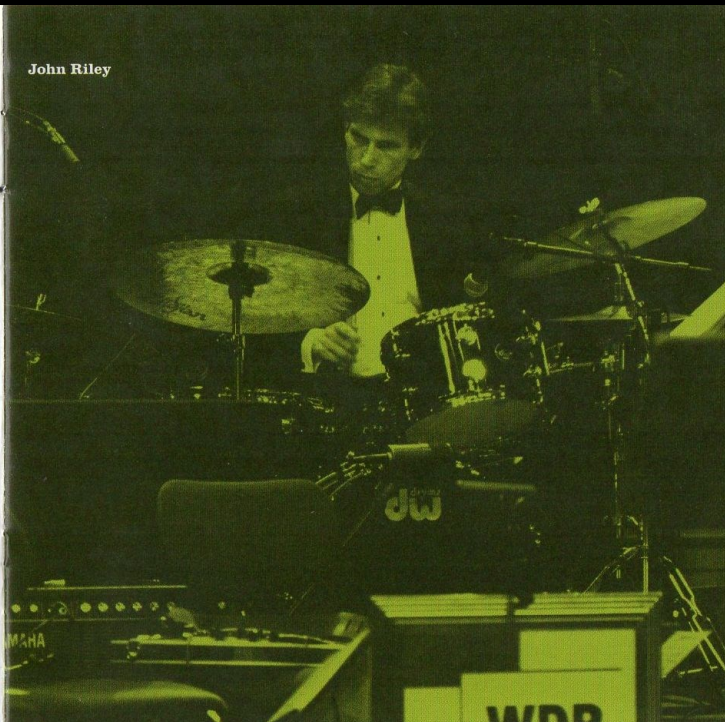
unfriendly parting remark, which finds itself in the deep notes of the contrabass at the end of the work.

AMAD (the first four letters of Damascus read backwards) suggests an Islamic call to prayer, originally intoned by the trombonist Lawrence Brown. This piece has a strongly hypnotizing effect.

The idea for **AGRA** was given by the Taj Mahal and the tragic story connected with this structure. The builder, who dedicated it out of love to a beautiful woman, was locked up by his son into a room that offered him an agonizing view. For the rest of his life he was forced to look at the Taj Mahal without ever being able to step foot inside it. Originally, this work spotlighted Harry Carney and his grandiose baritone saxophone.

For **DEPK**, Ellington let himself get inspired by a dance in Amman, Jordan. The dance was performed by a dozen boys and girls who did a little kick on every sixth beat. This piece brings out Ellington's piano and several surprising rhythmic twists and turns. **Isfahan** (1966), also from *The Far East Suite*, is one of Billy Strayhorn's most beautiful ballads, which spotlighted Johnny Hodges on his exquisite alto saxophone.

John Riley



01 **TAKE THE COLTRANE** 6:32

MUSIC BY DUKE ELLINGTON (TEMPO MUSIC INC.),
ARRANGED BY BILL DOBBINS

PHIL WOODS, AS
OLIVIER PETERS, TS
JOHN RILEY, DR

FROM: "FAR EAST SUITE"

MUSIC BY DUKE ELLINGTON (TEMPO MUSIC INC.),
TRANSCRIPTION: BRIAN PRIESTLEY / DAVID BERGER / BILL DOBBINS

02 **a) BLUE BIRD OF DELHI** 3:12

HEINER WIBERNY, CL

03 **b) AMAD** 4:39

DAVE HORLER, TB

04 **e) AGRA** 2:37

JENS NEUFANG, BS

05 **d) DEPK** 2:42

FRANK CHASTENIER, P

06 **e) ISFAHAN** 6:15

LINE-UP: PHIL WOODS, AS
BILL DOBBINS, P

07 **CARAVAN** 7:31

MUSIC BY DUKE ELLINGTON & JUAN TIZOL (MILLS MUSIC INC.),
ARRANGED BY BILL DOBBINS

PHIL WOODS, AS
JOHN RILEY, DR

FROM THE SUITE "SUCH SWEET THUNDER"

MUSIC BY DUKE ELLINGTON & BILLY STRAYHORN (TEMPO MUSIC INC.)

08 **a) SUCH SWEET THUNDER** 3:14

JOHN MARSHALL, TP
BERNT LAUKAMP, TB

09 **b) LADY MAC** 3:22

HARALD ROSENSTEIN, AS
KLAUS OSTERLOH, TP

10 **e) THE STAR-CROSSED LOVERS** 3:48

HEINER WIBERNY, AS

11 **d) UP AND DOWN** 3:12

JOHN MARSHALL, TP
NEGUMI TESHIMA-KALMAN, VL

12 **BLOOD COUNT** 6:11

MUSIC BY BILLY STRAYHORN (TEMPO MUSIC INC.), ARRANGED BY BILL DOBBINS
RICK KIEFER, TP

13 **ELLINGTON MEDLEY** 11:21

MUSIC BY DUKE ELLINGTON, ARRANGED BY BILL DOBBINS

1 **LOVE YOU MADLY**

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2 **COME SUNDAY**

© TEMPO MUSIC INC.

3 **IT DON'T MEAN A THING**

© MILLS MUSIC INC.

PHIL WOODS, CL, AS

Caravan (1936) was the collective work of Ellington and his valve trombonist, Juan Tizol. It is an early example of how successfully Ellington combined Latin American music with jazz. This arrangement incorporates an ostinato of the contrabass and several rhythmic modulations. The idea for it is based on the Miles Davis Quintet's recording of Wayne Shorter's melody "Footprints."

SUCH SWEET THUNDER, composed in 1957 and also known as the **SHAKESPEAREAN SUITE**, is surely one of most musically successful of Ellington's extended compositions or suites. At least half of the twelve relatively short movements are unique among the works of Ellington. He himself said that the work was an attempt "to parallel the vignettes of some of the Shakespearean characters in miniature — sometimes to the point of caricature." Whoever knows Shakespeare's plays and characters that serve as models for the individual movements will be amazed at how ingeniously these are reflected in his music. What remains for those who are not so well-versed in Shakespeare's work is the admiration for the great mastery in the composition, as well as in the interpretation recorded on vinyl. The title of the complete suite, as well as the first movement, originates from Scene 1, Act IV of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

"I never heard so musical a discord, such sweet thunder." It would be impossible to find any other line that could more fittingly describe Ellington's music.

The opening movement, entitled **Such Sweet Thunder**, was also inspired by the play *Othello*. According to Ellington, the melody here points to "the sweet and swinging, very convincing story Othello told Desdemona. It must have been the most, because when her father complained and tried to have the marriage annulled, the Duke of Venice said that if Othello had said this to his daughter, she would have gone for it, too." The music features a muted brass section, the saxophone section and a trumpet solo that was originally played by Ray Nance.

The main female character in the play *Macbeth* provided the inspiration for **Lady Mac**, a jazz waltz spotlighting the saxophone section and a trumpet solo that was earlier performed by Clark Terry. Ellington's take on *Lady Macbeth*: "She was a lady of noble birth, yet I have the suspicion that she had a little ragtime in her soul."

The **Star-Crossed Lovers** naturally refer to Romeo and Juliet. It is one of Ellington's and Strayhorn's most beautiful ballads with an alto saxophone solo originally played by Johnny Hodges.



Up And Down, Up And Down, I Will Lead Them Up And Down is a verse from A Midsummer Night's Dream that describes Puck's merrymaking in an enchanted forest. Demetrius and Helena, Lysander and Hermia, as well as Oberon and Titania, king and queen of the fairies, are led through all sorts of foolery while Puck amusingly watches and calls out: "Lord, what fools these mortals be." These three couples are musically depicted by a clarinet and a violin (originally by Jimmy Hamilton and Ray Nance), an alto and a tenor saxophone (originally by Russell Procope and Paul Gonsalves), as well as an alto saxophone and a valve trombone (originally by Johnny Hodges and Paul Sanders). Puck's role had originally been undertaken by the trumpeter Clark Terry, who played the famous quote. The remaining instruments in the band are utilized as a single large group and the soloists are contrasted in the form of a concerto grosso. Humor so effectively employed makes this movement one of the perhaps best examples of it in Western music.

Although it was already elaborated during the Forties, **Blood Count** (1967) is among the last works that Strayhorn completed, and it was initially recorded shortly after his death. This arrangement was very

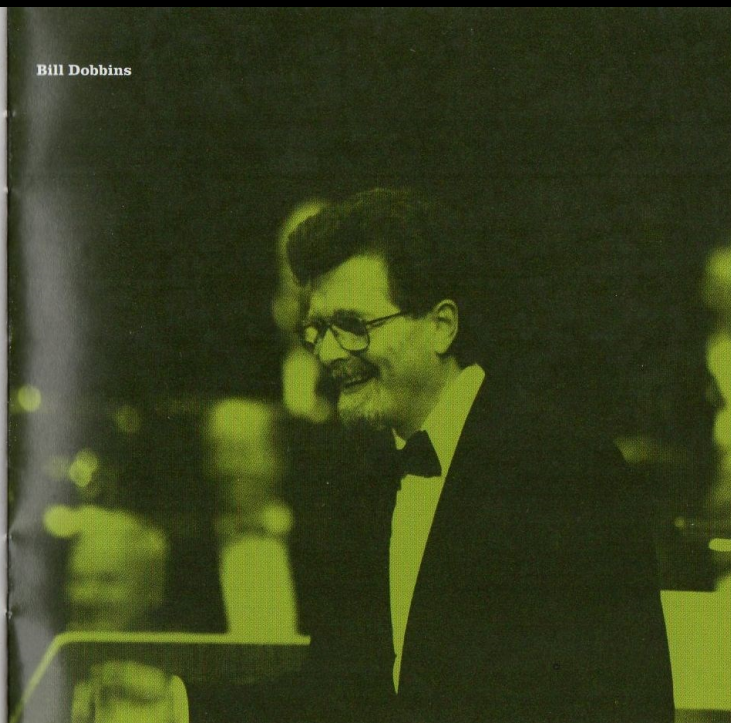
specially written for this concert and for the trumpeter, Rick Kiefer.

The concluding medley returns to three better-known Ellington pieces: **Love You Madly** (1950), **Come Sunday** from **BLACK, BROWN AND BEIGE** (1943) and **It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing** (1932).

The title of the first piece comes from a sentence Ellington used to greet his audience at an opportune moment during every performance. The second piece contains one of Ellington's most memorable melodies that is as natural as a folk song. Not only does the concluding piece make a prophecy about the entire Swing Era, it also reflects an important aspect of Ellington's aesthetic. While Ellington's music encompasses an enormous reservoir of musical vocabulary and stylistic elements, it also very convincingly illustrates an almost infinite number of the possibilities of swing. One way or another, swing is a characteristic that has to be discovered and felt in every Ellington composition and recording. Naturally, there are a number of other qualities in the work of Duke Ellington and his orchestra to enjoy and to marvel at. As in every great type of music, the cultural and spiritual value of Ellington's music will further gain in quality with increasing age.

Bill Dobbins

Bill Dobbins



Produced by Wolfgang Hirschmann

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THE WDR BIG BAND MASTERS

01 **TAKE THE COLTRANE** 6:32

FROM: "FAR EAST SUITE":

02 **a) BLUE BIRD OF DELHI** 3:1203 **b) AMAD** 4:3904 **c) AGRA** 2:3705 **d) DEPK** 2:4206 **e) ISFAHAN** 6:1507 **CARAVAN** 7:31

FROM THE SUITE "SUCH SWEET THUNDER":

08 **a) SUCH SWEET THUNDER** 3:1409 **b) LADY MAC** 3:2210 **c) THE STAR-CROSSED LOVERS** 3:4811 **d) UP AND DOWN** 3:1212 **BLOOD COUNT** 6:1113 **ELLINGTON MEDLEY** 11:21

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