

DUKE ELLINGTON



WEST COAST TOUR



A Division of Phoenix Entertainment & Talent

**DUKE ELLINGTON
WEST COAST TOUR**

JAZ-2010-A

SIDE ONE

1. MIDRIFF (Billy Strayhorn) (3:31) Robbins Music Corp.-ASCAP
2. BOY MEETS HORN (Ellington Edward Kennedy-Rex Stewart-Irving Mills)
American Academy of Music Inc.-ASCAP
3. WARM VALLEY (Ellington Edward Kennedy) (3:46)
Robbins Music Corp.-ASCAP
4. LOVE YOU MADLY (Ellington Edward Kennedy) (3:04)
Tempo Music Inc.-ASCAP
5. INDIAN SUMMER (Herbert Victor-Al Dubin) (2:59)
Harms Inc.-ASCAP
6. ALL DAY LONG (Billy Strayhorn) (2:58)
Tempo Music Inc.-ASCAP
7. THE HAPPENING (Paul Gonzales) (2:20)
Tempo Music Inc.-ASCAP
8. GOTTO GO (Duke Ellington) (1:18)
Tempo Music Inc.-ASCAP

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**DUKE ELLINGTON
WEST COAST TOUR**

JAZ-2010-B

SIDE TWO

1. DIMINUENDO IN BLUE/CRESCENDO IN BLUE (11:41)
(Ellington E. Kennedy)
American Academy of Music Inc.-ASCAP
2. NIGHT WALK (Anderson Edward Kennedy) (2:59)
Robbins Music Corp.-ASCAP
3. HARLEM AIRSHAFT (Ellington Edward Kennedy) (3:32)
Robbins Music Corp.-ASCAP
4. THINGS AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE (6:35)
(Mercer Ellington-Ted Persons)
Tempo Music Inc.-ASCAP

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DUKE ELLINGTON

When you ask someone to name an American jazz artist or big band leader, even if the person you ask is not familiar with the music, he or she will probably name Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington.

From his rise to national prominence with the band he lead at the Cotton Club in the late 1920's to his third and final sacred concert in 1973, the Duke proved to be a man worthy of his nickname. While some band leaders were content to simply let their music swing, Ellington combined a jazz lover's band with compositions that, at times, bordered on classical. That is not idle praise. Among Duke's many admirers were Stravinsky and Shostakovich, who both unashamedly named him as one of the great living composers.

Writers like analogies — it makes their work easier to be able to describe something in terms generally understandable to a broad audience. But Ellington defies such definition. You can compare his band to Count Basie's, but that would not be fair. Yes, they were both big bands, but they were coming from different directions. Basie was a Kansas City showboating chart and soloists, while east-coaster Ellington used his band as a vehicle for his compositions. This is not meant to be a slight to Basie, but simply to show how the two bands differed. Ellington could be a swinger and crowd pleaser as well — as the selections on this record indicate.

The settings for these recordings were nightclubs, not concert halls, and people came to hear a

big band, not the Duke's new compositions. Besides, people were happy just to hear a big band when these recordings were made, let alone Ellington's.

The year 1951 was hardly a banner year for road bands. The country was well taken by the bebop revolution, and combos were the word of the day. Not just for artistic merit, but for financial considerations as well. Big band music began moving out of the dance and concert halls and into the television studios. Massive audiences were captivated by the still-novel medium, and people were less inclined to see live in person what they could see live on television.

Young people, the large audience for big band music in the forties, when it was considered "pop," would soon gravitate to a rhythm and blues derivative called rock and roll.

Ellington, however, continued. Although not forging ahead into the musical unknown as he once did, the Duke managed to keep his band going.

In the sense it was not easy for other big bands, nor was it smooth sailing for Ellington. His band underwent substantial personnel changes in the early 1950's, which make it difficult for arrangements to sound as crisp and driving as they could be. One established section member missing from a band might not be noticed by the audience, but several changes would definitely have an impact on a band's sound and be noticed.

By the time these recordings were made, the Ellington band had suffered mass defections of

the worst kind. It had lost altoist Johnny Hodges, trombonist Lawrence Brown and a longtime Ellington compatriot, drummer Sonny Greer. Jazz at the Philharmonic producer Norman Granz managed to coax those musicians into becoming the nucleus of a new group headed by Hodges.

Ellington recovered quickly. He lured Willie Smith, Louis Bellson and Juan Tizol away from the Harry James band to fill the chairs vacated by Hodges, Greer and Brown, respectively.

Before you get disappointed, suffice it to say the band featured on these tracks carried Ray Nance, William "Cat" Anderson, Harry Carney and Juan Tizol. Hardly second-stringers.

These radio transcriptions were recorded in June, 1951, at both Birdland in New York and The Meadowbrook in Cedar Grove, N.J. Ellington himself can be heard, as well as an unknown announcer, introducing the tunes as well as indicating the vocalists and featured soloists.

One footnote, though. This record also featured versions of *Diminuendo in Blue* and *Crescendo in Blue* played by another Ellington newcomer — Paul Gonzales. Those tunes were to forever become associated with him after a roaring 27-chorus solo at the 1956 Newport Jazz Festival.

But that's another story, for another record album.

Mitchell James

I would like to thank the staff of the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University in Newark, N.J., for their help in preparing these liner notes.

SIDE ONE

Midriff (a)	3:31
Boy Meets Horn (e)	5:15
Warm Valley (e)	3:46
Love You Madly (e)	3:04
Indian Summer (a)	2:59
All Day Long (a)	2:58
The Happening (b)	2:20
Got to Go (b)	1:18

SIDE TWO

Diminuendo in Blue (e)	11:41
Crescendo in Blue (e)	2:59
Night Walk (c)	3:32
Harlem Airshaft (d)	6:35
Things Ain't What They Used to Be (c)	

Probable Personnel: trumpets — Harold "Shorty" Baker, Nelson "Cadillac" Williams; William "Cat" Anderson, Ray Nance; trombones — Quentin "Butter" Jackson; Britt Woodman; Juan Tizol; reeds — Jimmy Hamilton, cl., fl.; Willie Smith, as.; Paul Gonzales, ts. cl.; Harry Carney, bar. cl.; rhythm — Duke Ellington, p.; Wendell Marshall, b.; Louis Bellson, dr.; vocals — Norma Oldham.

Recording dates and locations:
a. June 6, 1951, The Meadowbrook, Cedar Grove, N.J.

b. June 8, 1951, as above.

c. June 11, 1951, as above.

d. June 21, 1951, Birdland, New York City.

e. June 30, 1951, as above.



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