

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FJ 2968

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

FIRST ANNUAL TOUR OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST, SPRING 1952

Live Recordings by Wally Heider Remastered 1983 by Jack Towers Edited and Sequenced by Peter F. O'Brien, S.J.



COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

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MUSIC LP

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ELLINGTON DUKE 1899-1974
DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS
ORCHESTRA SOUND RECORDING
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SIDE A

early 1952—location unknown

- Take the "A" Train* 5:09
Billy Strayhorn (Tempo Music, Inc.)
March 10, 1952—Salem, Oregon
- Fancy Dan* 5:14
Duke Ellington (Tempo Music, Inc.)
- Time On My Hands* 5:00
Vincent Youmans, Harold Adamson, Mack Gordon
(Miller Music Corp.)
- On the Sunny Side of the Street* 3:28
Jimmy McHugh, Dorothy Fields (Shapiro, Bernstein & Co., Inc.)
- Tea for Two* 3:31
Vincent Youmans, Irving Caesar (Irving Caesar/Warner Bros.
Music Corp. & CVY Music Pub. Co.)
- Blue Skies* (Trumpet (s) No End) 2:21
Irving Berlin (arr. Mary Lou Williams)
(Irving Berlin Music Corp.)

total time: 25:40

SIDE B

March 10, 1952—Salem, Oregon

- It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)* 6:48
Duke Ellington, Irving Mills (Mills Music, Inc.)
- Lady of the Lavender Mist* 3:17
Duke Ellington (Mercer K. Ellington)
- How High the Moon* 6:12
William Lewis, Nancy Hamilton (Chappell & Co., Inc.)
- April 1952—Olympia, Washington
- The Tattooed Bride (Aberdeen)* 6:30
Duke Ellington (Mercer K. Ellington)
- Love You Madly* 3:13
Duke Ellington (Mercer K. Ellington)

total time: 26:24

Personnel:

Cat Anderson, Willie Cook, Clark Terry—trumpets
Ray Nance—trumpet, violin, vocal
Quentin Jackson, Juan Tizol, Britt Woodman—trombones
Paul Gonsalves—tenor sax
Jimmy Hamilton—tenor sax and clarinet
Russell Procope, Willie Smith—alto saxes

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SIDE C

April 1952—Olympia, Washington

- Bensonality* 3:00
Duke Ellington (Mercer K. Ellington)
- Don't Worry 'Bout Me* 4:10
Rube Bloom (Mills Music Inc.)
- Deep Purple* 3:40
Mitchell Parish, Peter DeRose (Robbins Music Corp.)
- Caravan* 4:00
Duke Ellington, Juan Tizol, Irving Mills
(American Academy of Music Inc.)
- Cottontail* 4:10
Duke Ellington (Robbins Music Corp.)
- April 29, 1952—Yakima, Washington
- Solitude* 4:40
Duke Ellington, Edgar DeLange, Irving Mills
(American Academy of Music Inc.)

total time: 25:10

SIDE D

April 29, 1952—Yakima, Washington

- C Jam Blues (Duke's Place)* 4:40
Duke Ellington, William Katz, Ruth Roberts, Robert Thiele
(Robbins Music Corp.)
- Happy Birthday* (Birch Tree Groups Ltd.) :20
- Sophisticated Lady* 6:40
Duke Ellington, Mitchell Parish, Irving Mills
(Mills Music, Inc. & Everbright Music Co.)
- Chelsea Bridge* 4:40
Billy Strayhorn (Tempo Music Inc.)
- Mood Indigo* 6:20
Duke Ellington, Barney Bigard, Irving Mills
(Mills Music Inc.)

total time: 23:20

Harry Carney—baritone sax and bass clarinet
Duke Ellington—piano
Wendell Marshall—bass
Louis Bellson—drums
Jimmy Grissom, Betty Roche—vocals

All Selections—ASCAP

Original recordings made in the field by Wally Heider.
Remastering: Jack Towers—1983

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

FIRST ANNUAL TOUR OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST, SPRING 1952

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FJ 2968

DUKE ELLINGTON LIVE in the PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Mary Lou Williams, the Jazz pianist and composer, often taught her classes on Jazz, and its history, by using an illustration of The Tree of Jazz she designed. The roots reached deeply into the ground of Suffering. The tree grew tall, wide, and strong. The bark of this musical tree was covered with The Blues from bottom to top. Up the trunk of the tree, beginning at its base, were emblazoned: the Spirituals, then Ragtime, then Kansas City Swing, then Bop or Modern. To the lower left were some withered leafless branches labeled "exercises", "cults", "rock". Written on the leaves which richly covered the rest of the Tree were many of the greatest of all the Jazz Names: Armstrong, Gillespie, Parker, Holiday, Hawkins, Young, Christian, Webster, Monk, Strayhorn, Hodges, Coltrane, Bechet, among others, and, in large letters, on one wide leaf: ELLINGTON.

In explaining the evolution of Jazz in her lectures and from her piano, Mary Lou would journey through these five forms of music: the Spirituals (under which she included Gospel Music); Ragtime (the swinging sort of ragged style around 1917 that just predated the brilliance of James P. Johnson - not the more Europeanized world of Scott Joplin); then a strong dose of the old-fashioned Slow Blues in which she insisted that all good Jazz, in no matter what advanced form, must participate (hence the Blues being represented by the very bark of the tree throughout); then on to the strong swinging left hand - the two-fisted attack of Kansas City Swing. She'd round out these illustrations, done on solo piano, with two versions of boogie-woogie, another form of the Blues: one medium slow and funky, which she named at various times Chunka Lunka or Baby Bear Boogie, then blend into several choruses of her famous composition Roll Em, first written and scored for Benny Goodman's orchestra in 1936.

At the conclusion of all this, she would announce that the audience had just heard The History of Jazz. She would then proceed to play "the way I play now" and, joined by her bassist, she would work her way through a composition that was boppish and modern and advanced, but comprehensive in subtle ways of all that had gone on during "the history".

In these demonstrations, Mary Lou Williams showed that she had actually spanned all the eras in the history of Jazz and had developed musically along with them - from its earliest forms right up to the avant garde. Duke Ellington said himself that "in her playing, and in her writing, she was always just a little bit ahead." Other Jazz Artists contributed so originally, or so heavily, within one or another of those developments, that they remained musically in place, without much change or development, thereafter. There was one Jazz Artist who went, in his own words, 'beyond category'. He simply created an entire musical world that was his own - a world that ran sometimes parallel, and sometimes not, to the unfolding evolution of Jazz as a whole. That world was the world of Duke Ellington.

The Ellington Orchestra proved, again and again, to be one of the enduring musical glories of our era. Though Ellington himself was an exceptional and full-bodied pianist, whose early inspiration came from the great stride pianists James P. Johnson and Willie 'the Lion' Smith, his instrument was not really the piano at all, but the amazing collection of highly gifted, and, as he referred to them, "expensive" gentlemen: his Band. He needed the luxury of having these men immediately at hand, at all times. Ellington was essentially a composer. He wanted

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to hear his new music - the music he so constantly composed - as quickly as possible.

One of my favorite images of Ellington has him riding, late at night, from one gig to another, in the front seat of the car driven by stalwart Harry Carney, with Ellington composing aided by a flashlight. The next day, at rehearsal, no doubt, or the following evening on the stand, without benefit of rehearsal, the new music would come to life. The Band, being large, was capable of reproducing the full range of Ellington's complex harmonies and rich voicings; the soulfulness, and high individuality of many of its members, added to the beauty and subtlety of Ellington's writing. He knew exactly how to compose so that the special talents of each of his men shone brightest. The Band itself, or series of Bands, the playing styles of its great soloists, the very tone of their individual voices (one thinks especially of Johnny Hodges, Harry Carney, Bubber Miley, Joe 'Tricky Sam' Nanton, Cootie Williams, for a while Ben Webster) was also, in its turn, an essential part of Ellington's daily inspiration as a composer.

Ellington's reputation and majesty grew and grew. Perfect recordings, the brilliance of 1940-41, the annual Carnegie Hall Concerts in the 40s, Black Brown & Beige, the extended compositions, the Suites, the endless traveling, the King of Thailand, receptions by Heads of State, Awards, the Sacred Concerts, Newport in 1956, the scores for television and the films, his 70th Birthday Party at the White House, all held together by Ellington's elegance and courtliness, by the polish of his public manner, created a brilliant aura, and an important personage. All this high reputation and lofty talk, however, fails to take notice of one hard cold fact: Ellington had to go to work.

He needed money to retain this expensive toy - this Band. He could not afford the luxury of six months of seclusion each year for the writing

of music. He was not a funded composer. He earned the money nightly to keep together the means for hearing his works and some of the means for his inspiration. His life as a composer was interwoven with the strenuous task of life as a bandleader and performer: a man constantly on the job and constantly going to work. His life meant endless one night stands. He played for dances, charity dinners, lodge meetings, proms, in the clubs, for this Society or that, all interspersed with the grand events: the composing of the Suites, and the music for the Sacred Concerts to be played in places like The Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City or Westminster Abbey in England, with the carefully prepared for record dates, the command performances, and the travel to Europe, or South America, or Japan.

I also suspect that without the constant activity of making the job, getting to the next gig, and the need for original music on those jobs, that the flow of music from Ellington's mind would not have been so great. The actual composing came out of the actual life as lived: on the road, with the Band, working.

So - this double set of records might very well fit into the title of Studs Terkel's famous book Working. Recorded by Wally Heider, in the field, and drawn from four separate dates during Ellington's first annual tour of the Pacific Northwest in 1952, they show how the Band sounded, during that period, outside state occasions. All these dates are located in Ballrooms or Armories, in Oregon or the state of Washington, where Ellington had been hired to play for dancers.

A full and rich set of recordings it is. Add this double set to the records of the Carnegie Hall Concerts in the forties, to the Treasury Hour Broadcasts of the same decade, to the Sacred Concerts recorded live, to the 70th Birthday Party, and especially to the brilliant three record collection, set down for all eternity by the blessed Jack Towers

on Nov. 7, 1940: Duke Ellington at Fargo, 1940 (#30-5622) available from Book of the Month Records, Camp Hill, Pa. 17012 - live from the Crystal Ballroom in Fargo, North Dakota. It was Jack who remastered the tapes for this present collection for Folkways, correctly identified all the tunes, dates in 1952, personnel, solos, and with the help of his friend Maurice Banks, identified the voice of Harry Carney wishing Duke a happy 17th Birthday (actually his 53rd) on Side 4 of these records.

Though the Band had only recently suffered a triple loss when Lawrence Brown, Johnny Hodges, and Sonny Greer left tout ensemble, it had regained Tizol, acquired the sturdy Willie Smith on alto, enjoyed the supreme ability and beauty of tone of Jimmy Hamilton, Carney continued at anchor, contributing as much as anyone to the identifiable Ellington sound, Nance was still there, as well as Cat Anderson, Gonsalves was on board, and the youthful high spirits of Clark Terry and Louis Bellson added fire.

Side A begins with Billy Strayhorn's Take the A Train, which is only fitting, since the tune with its exciting arrangement, became the Ellington Band's theme immediately after its composition in 1941 - the tune once introduced on television by Lawrence Welk as Take a Train. It is an isolated selection from a date labeled "early 1952 - location unknown" by W.E. Turner in The Recorded Music of Duke Ellington and his Sidemen (1979 edition). Away from the perfectly balanced and carefully crafted arrangements worked out for recording dates, it was often Duke's habit, on the job, to begin a selection, as he does here, on piano, accompanied by bass and drums. He prances through A Train three full times before the Band roars in with the Strahorn arrangement. Ray Nance follows with his original 32 bar A Train solo. The rest of the arrangement continues to feature Nance, out in front, accompanied now by the Reed Section, through the middle of the song backed by the full Band, then out with only the reeds behind him.

On the morning after Duke died, I was watching the Today Show on NBC television. They announced that Duke had indeed died. His photograph showing him young, dashing, in Black Tie and Top Hat appeared on the screen. The joyful sounds of A Train burst from the small TV. The emotion was overwhelming.

Though I mentioned before that Ellington's true instrument was his Band, he was also a very fine pianist. Look to the superb recording The Money Jungle in trio with Charles Mingus and Max Roach, or the duets with Jimmy Blanton, and, toward the end of his career, with Ray Brown. Recall the live recording at Newport in 1956 when Duke two-fisted his way through four or six choruses of Diminuendo in Blue, following which the rhythm section, propeled by an offstage Jo Jones shouting and wailing rhythmic encouragement, drove the Band through the arrangement and then Paul Gonsalves through 27 blues choruses, and the Band again through the final blazing Crescendo in Blue - a performance which ultimately landed Duke on the cover of Time Magazine.

We are treated to an ample hearing of Ellington's piano playing throughout these sides: in addition to A Train, Fancy Dan begins at a nice medium tempo with piano. Duke plays while waiting for his men to arrive on the stand. Interpolated every now and then into the melody of Fancy Dan one hears what came to be known as "the band call", a short four bar snatch of melody that is actually the beginning of a much earlier Ellington composition Duke Steps Out. On the Sunnyside of the Street begins with 16 bars of Duke's piano by way of introduction, then, as one of the greatest of the Ellington vocalists, Betty Roche, delineates the song, the accompaniment, by and large, remains piano, bass, and drums. Aside from Ivie Anderson, the greatest of all the Ellington singers, and though I much enjoy Alice Babs whose beautiful soprano graced Ellington's sacred concerts, Betty Roche remains my favorite Ellington singer. She is strong, direct, witty, displays the artful

delayed phrasing that gives Jazz its soulful feeling, and has a way of sounding very modern indeed. She prefigures in a way the great Betty Carter. Roche presents Sunnyside as well as Love You Madly, the insouciant Ellington song that could easily become a hit. Both are a joy.

We are treated to Ellington's piano for a full chorus on It Don't Mean a Thing where we experience a muted return to James P. Johnson; for the last lovely eight bars of Lavender Mist; to some slightly impatient noodling in which one hears the floating refrain of Oh What a Beautiful Morning as Duke waits for his men to gather to present the really interesting and marvelous The Tattooed Bride (aka Aberdeen); for a few bars at the beginning of the Basic-like blues Personality (whose arrangement has rich, long, top to bottom marching chords that are so pleasureable); for 16 bars of vigorous Ellington atonality on Cottontail; for a real romp in How High the Moon; and for a full opening chorus on Solitude with the piano much in evidence during the rest of the tune. This says nothing of the hard-driving accompaniment throughout - the direction - the leadership - the encouragement from the piano - the strength and joy of every chord and fill for every second and beat the Band plays.

Duke was so prolific a composer and writer, and he achieved so much fame for his own songs, his original works, his personal voicings and sounds, the beauty of his extended works, and his unique image, that it comes as a surprise that he often used standards, the popular songs of others, in his repertoire. In addition to Sunnyside and How High the Moon already mentioned, the list continues with Time on My Hands delivering us into the hands of Jimmy Hamilton on clarinet. For the first beautifully flowing and gentle 32 bars, he deftly sketches in the melody, then follows with a superb full chorus improvisation accompanied only by Wendell Marshall's easy bass, and the softest of drums from Bellson. The Band begins to come in underneath, in what is probably an arrangement by Duke, with the reeds and trombones richly massed together, with a good taste of Car-

ney near the end. A perfectly balanced cadenza from Hamilton precedes the Band's joining in for the ending of a beautiful and straightforward rendition of the song.

Hamilton returns later with Deep Purple which, oddly, is my favorite piece on the entire album. Hamilton's clarinet rises out of the unison reeds. They gradually blend into harmony behind him as he presents his perfect phrases, passion and tenderness in control. Carney dominates and blends the reeds, the bass bows beautifully toward the end. The restraint, the purity of design from first to last note, lead Duke to exclaim at the conclusion "Ah! Pretty! Ah! That was Pretty!" Yes, indeed.

Willie Smith, formerly and lengthily of the Lunceford Band, and for a time with Harry James, now with Duke in 1952, steps forward on alto to offer a sturdy rendition of Tea for Two, at a medium tempo. He improvises well in the Hawkins style with Duke comping apace. As Smith begins to bear down, the level of piano, bass, and drums increases. The Band starts to come in ad lib with the trombones pushing, then the trumpets. The cut: a good example of what a small piece of an authentic 30s jam session must have been like.

The first side closes with Mary Lou Williams' rip-roaring arrangement of Blue Skies called Trumpets No End. She wrote it in 1943 as a feature for her husband Harold Baker. By the time it came to be recorded, and used again and again by Ellington in the late forties and on through to the end, it had been edited into a succinct and tight arrangement that supported the virtuoso pyrotechnics of the trumpet section in a series of solos. But the arrangement seems to have undergone many metamorphoses. In Stanley Dance's book The World of Duke Ellington, Cat Anderson says: "At the Earle Theatre, the band used to play Mary Lou Williams' arrangement of Blue Skies. It wasn't just a trumpet feature

then. There was a chorus of clarinet by Jimmy Hamilton, a chorus of tenor by Al Sears, a release by Claude Jones, and Ben Stewart used to play the ending. After listening to it all week, and I'm a great listener to anything good, especially on trumpet, I knew his solo. We were at a theatre in Canton, and Rex didn't show. So when Duke asked if anyone wanted to play it, and nobody volunteered, he said, 'What about the new trumpet player?' I told him I'd try, and after the other solos I came down front and played it an octave higher. When I ended up on a double C and the people were applauding, Duke said, 'Good, we'll keep it just like that.' As luck would have it, Rex came in the stage door as I was blasting away. He didn't speak to me for fifteen years. He was highly strung, and so am I."

Anderson's remarks are revealing because there is a great deal to the arrangement itself as it supports and lifts the series of trumpet solos. Heavy use is made of the trombones by Mary Lou - this in the Ellington manner of favoring loud trombones - while the saxes and the entire band are gathered together in great waves of supporting sound. An interesting little study might be made if the original manuscripts of the arrangement could be found and the various editings and changes traced. I'd like to hear a first rate band record this again - in the new era of good sound reproduction - with the higher octave taken out, and the trumpets pulled more in relation to the sounds of the arranger which favor, as Ellington often did, the middle and lower part of the staff.

The newcomer on trumpet of 1952, Clark Terry, presents a straight version of the ballad Don't Worry 'bout Me in good danceable fashion. How High the Moon (the National Anthem for Jazz Lovers during the forties) in an exuberant arrangement by Duke, wails. Bravo! Now if you want to count Happy Birthday as a standard, let's say the band plays it well.

The rest of these four sides are pure Ellington. Sometimes he comes disguised in the shape of Billy Strayhorn. A few listeners will be those aficionados familiar with the loveliness of The Lady of the Lavender Mist and with the originality and excitement and interest of The Tattooed Bride. Some will know the jaunty Fancy Dan and the tenderness of Strayhorn's Chelsea Bridge. Everyone will know A Train, It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing), Tizol's Caravan (excitement at a medium tempo in the words of Jack Towers), Cottontail (with Ben Webster's wonderful chorus for reeds), Solitude, C Jam Blues, the loneliness of the Sophisticated Lady, and the immortal trio of Mood Indigo. Duke fiercely guarded his scores and strove to protect the secrets of his originality. Scholars are now describing his genius bit by bit. For your part, listen to these records and be grateful. They are a fine addition to the Ellington bequest.

Peter F. O'Brien, S.J.
October 27, 1953
New York