THE METRONOME SERIES

Duke ELLINGTON

and His Orchestra

at The Crystal Gardens, Salem, Oregon 1952

2CD

CD 1

1.	**Fancy Dan** *(Ellington)*	5.37
2.	**The Hawk Talks** *(Bellson)*	3.17
3.	**Tenderly** *(Gross, Lawrence)*	5.01
4.	**Frustration** *(Ellington)*	4.01
5.	**Tea For Two** *(Youmans, Caesar)*	3.46
6.	**Take The A Train** *(Strayhorn)*	5.23
7.	**Sophisticated Lady** *(Ellington)*	6.38
8.	**Don't Worry 'Bout Me** *(Bloom, Koehler)*	4.21
9.	**Perdido** *(Tizol)*	5.37
10.	**The Jeep Is Jumping** *(Hodges)*	3.04
11.	**Deep Purple** *(Parish, DeRose)*	4.09
12.	**Caravan** *(Tizol, Ellington, Mills)*	4.29
13.	**Warm Valley** *(Ellington, Russell)*	4.50
14.	*Medley* **I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart** *(Ellington, Nemo, Redmond),* **Don't Get Around Much Anymore** *(Ellington, Russell)*	4.19

CD 2

1.	**Mood Indigo** *(Ellington)*	6.31
2.	**How High The Moon** *(Lewis,Hamilton)*	6.49
3.	**Monologue** *(aka Pretty and the Wolf) (Ellington, Hamilton)*	3.22
4.	**Duet** *(Ellington)*	3.34
5.	**Skin Deep** *(Bellson)*	7.32
6.	**Blues At Sundown** *(Ellington)*	3.11
7.	**Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me** *(Ellington,Russell)*	2.13
8.	**It Don't Mean A Thing** *(Ellington)*	7.09
9.	**Dancers in Love** *(Ellington)*	3.06
10.	**The Tattooed Bride** *(Ellington)*	13.09
11.	**Trumpets No End** *(Blue Skies) (Berlin)*	2.37
12.	**Take the A Train** - *partial playout*	0.30

Personnel

Duke Ellington & His Orchestra:

Cat Anderson, Willie Cook, Ray Nance, Clark Terry, trpts; Quentin Jackson, Britt Woodman, trmbs; Juan Tizol, valve trmb; Jimmy Hamilton, clrnt and t/s; Willie Smith, Russell Procope, a/s; Paul Gonzalves, t/s; Harry Carney, bar/s; Duke Ellington, pno; Wendell Marshall, bs; Louie Bellson, drms, Jimmy Grissom, voc.

A note from David Lennick

Two sources were used for this issue. One was a set of five microgroove lacquers, purchased from the estate of a Toronto jazz promoter, and the other was a tape copy which surfaced just after the lacquer discs had been transferred to digital. Both were dubbed from a common original set of tapes, but neither contained the beginning of the performance, some tunes were incomplete on both copies, each one had some edits but in different places, and neither set was in a logical sequence. The best was taken from the two sources.

Production - Alastair Robertson • Original Transfer Compilation - David Lennick.
Restoration, Editing and Digital Remastering - Alan Bunting • Design - Brian Johnston

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Jesse James (1847-1882) is one of a string of American scoundrels which includes the likes of Billy The Kid, Al Capone, Jack The Bear, Bernie Madoff and Leona Hemsley.

Jesse and his brother Frank formed a gang which pulled-off a spectacular series of robberies for about ten years, beginning in the mid 1860s. For at least a century afterwards, stories of the "Great James Robbery" became part of popular culture - romanticized and celebrated with impunity by a number of authors and film makers. ***But we're supposed to be talking about music.....***

Harry James (1916-1983) was not related to Jesse. Not a robber, he was a trumpet player. And one of the best amongst the slew who were liberated in tone, technique, register and rhythm by Louis Armstrong. Harry came to fame as a member of Benny Goodman's orchestra in 1937 and by 1938, he had left to form his own band - which in 1942 was considered to be second only to Glenn Miller.

However good the groups or Harry James and Glenn Miller, many people consider the best - and certainly most artistic - American Orchestra to emerge out of the jazz and dance band scene in the United States, was that of Duke Ellington (1899-1974). Formed as a teenagers band in Washington, DC and eventually making way to New York in the early 1920s, Ellington's orchestra was hired to

provide music at Harlem's legendary Cotton Club. After his first tour in Europe (1933) and a constant stream of innovative compositions, Duke Ellington was recognized as an artist - as one who helped define jazz as an art form.

By 1942, Ellington had recently suffered some significant musical losses. Musicians from his spectacular 1940 band had departed. Trumpeter Cootie Williams left to join Benny Goodman; tenor saxophonist BenWebster and clarinetist Barney Bigard resigned to play in smaller groups; valve-trombonist Juan Tizol was soon-to-leave and join Harry James' band in 1944; virtuoso bassist, Jimmie Blanton, had died in 1942 at age 24 - having played with Ellington for only two years.

But despite these losses, Ellington continued to compose - and write what he may have considered his Masterpiece, *Black, Brown And Beige*, for a performance in Carnegie Hall concert on January 23, 1943.

Soon after, Ellington wrote another in his series of "hit songs". *I'm Beginning to See the Light* became a popular song and jazz standard, - it was composed with help from Johnny Hodges, and Juan Tizol's new employer Harry James, lyrics by Don George, and published in 1944.

By the time WWII was over, big bands declined as they were no longer sustainable. Harry James succeeded by maintaining an "ad hoc" orchestra and by doing a fair amount of film work - appearing in movies and playing on sound tracks. In 1946, Ellington's great talking-plunger trombonist, Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton died and another of the original Washingtonians, Otto Hardwick had left. Nevertheless, Ellington continued to compose strikingly original art music which further elevated the consideration of jazz. Significantly, Ellington had found a number of new musicians who would remain as prominent members well into the 1960s: the brilliant virtuoso clarinetist, Jimmy Hamilton; alto saxophonist & funky clarinettist, Russell Procope; trumpeters Ray Nance and Cat Anderson. But there were still more losses to come. Perhaps the biggest blow after losing Cootie Williams, was the resignation of Johnny Hodges and Lawrence Brown, in 1951. The Duke was in trouble - struggling with some unsuitable replacements. He had to act. And so, Duke Ellington staged his own "Great James Robbery".

According to Juan Tizol, the caper went like this: *"I was with Harry James in one club and Duke was in another club {in Las Vegas}, so I used to go there between intermissions and he asked me if I could get Louie {Bellson}. He asked about me, to get me, and I said, 'Well, how about Willie Smith too? So the three of us, we went to Duke Ellington. Oh, Harry was mad at me. Oh, the band were crazy about Louie. I can remember when he first came in, how the band used to look so bored during a drum solo - or just bored most of the time - and then, when Louie came in they all turned around and watched and applauded, and stood up."*

Stewart Nicholson. *"Reminiscing In Tempo"*

These three musicians joined the band on Tuesday March 27, 1951 - near the end of an engagement (March 21-29) at the Orpheum Theatre in Omaha, Nebraska.

Of course Tizol easily blended back into the fold. Willie Smith, was considered one of the four best lead alto players in the world - Hodges, Hilton Jefferson (formerly with Fletcher Henderson) and Benny Carter, being the others. Smith had played lead alto with what many consider Ellington's most serious rival - the Jimmie Lunceford Orchestra. But it was certainly Louis Bellson, born July 6, 1924 - and then only 26 years old - who made the biggest impact.

In an article/interview for Jazz Times, November 2007, Don Heckman wrote:

"Always a quick learner, eager to improve his craft, Bellson immediately realized that bop drummers, led by Max Roach, were shaping the role of the drums into something very different from what it had been in the big swing bands."

"I was used to what you had to do to drive a big band: four solid beats on the bass drum," (Bellson said.) "No matter what the tempo was, they wanted to hear the bass drum. And, coming from that to bebop, I still liked to drop bombs now and then. Then Lester Young came to me once and said, 'Lou, just play titty-bop, titty-bop and don't drop no bombs.' That's when I got it, putting all that energy up into the right hand, playing on the cymbal. And I loved it. The left hand was syncopated, and the bass drum could be syncopated also, because a good bass player playing four beats to the bar took care of that basic beat."

For Bellson, who, from the very beginning, had been constantly in search of new sounds and timbres, far more an instrumentalist /percussionist than simply a drummer, the changes that bebop brought opened the door to unfettered creativity. When he left James in 1951 to join Ellington, the final piece in the complex picture of his musical persona, composition, came into place. Interestingly, the impetus came from a work Bellson says was originally written for the James band: **The Hawk Talks**.

"Harry was called 'The Hawk," he says, *"and it took a lot of coaxing from Juan Tizol to make me bring the piece to Duke. I told Juan, 'Are you crazy? You want me to bring music into a place with Duke and Billy Strayhorn? Geniuses like that? No way.' But I brought it in, and lo and behold, Duke recorded it right away."*

It was the start of a relationship that would have a profound impact upon Bellson, professionally and privately. But the first revelation awaiting him after he joined Ellington was unexpected. There were no drum parts. *"It was a real switch,"* he says, a note of amazement still in his voice, more than half a century later.

"With Harry's band, I had charts to read. With Duke, there was no drum music, no rehearsal. Fortunately, Clark Terry was in the band, and he showed me a lot of things, which was very helpful. But Duke gave me full credit for knowing what to do in the rhythm section. He said, 'I had Sonny Greer, and now I have Louis Bellson. I want to hear Louis Bellson."

Ellington obviously liked what he heard, once describing Bellson as *"the world's greatest drummer."* Bellson remained with the orchestra from 1951 to 1953, returning occasionally thereafter, while absorbing a virtual lifetime's worth of composing and arranging information via day-to-day contact with Ellington and Strayhorn. *"They were a magical pair, and it was a magical experience,"* the drummer recalls. *"I can see*

them now, like when they were working on the 'Nutcracker Suite,' with Billy leaning over Duke's shoulder, working over their ideas so closely that none of us, not even Johnny Hodges, could tell who wrote which part."

As the only white player in an all-African-American ensemble, Bellson also received some early lessons in race relations, lessons that served him well in his rare, for the time, interracial marriage to Pearl Bailey. "*After I was in the band for a couple of months, Duke said, 'We're going to make a tour down South to do a show with Sarah Vaughan and the Nat 'King' Cole Trio.' I said, 'OK,' and he said, 'Do you know what that means?' I was puzzled, so Duke said, 'I can't find another drummer who can do what you do, so I'm going to make you a Haitian.' And I said, 'I'm ready to play music, no matter what.' So I became a fair-skinned Haitian, and I stayed with the band wherever we went."*

And beyond this, there were four other newcomers to Ellington's Orchestra. The most recent being trumpeters Clark Terry ("stolen" from the Count Basie Orchestra) and from Dizzy Gillespie's 1950 big band came Willie Cook (who was at first, inspired by Harry James) Both men were hired during the same week in November, 1951. Trombonist Britt Woodman (February, 1951), a childhood friend of Charles Mingus, ostensibly replaced Lawrence Brown. Paul Gonzalves (September, 1950), became, arguably, the most significant tenor saxophonist Ellington ever had.

For the remainder of 1951, Ellington returned to New York with short trips taking his orchestra to nearby states and as far away as Chicago, Detroit and Canada - Montréal, Ottawa, Toronto. Small group recordings were made by Duke's son, Mercer, on the Mercer label and, as The Coronets, featuring the new members - Tizol, Smith, Bellson and Gonsalves with Cat Anderson, bassist Wendell Marshall (with the band since 1948) and Billy Strayhorn playing the piano. While in New York, the full big band recorded for Columbia Records - these mostly being 78 recordings, but also some of the first Lps - which included two pieces by Bellson - *Skin Deep* and *The Hawk Talks* (Written for Harry James who, like Coleman Hawkins, was nicknamed "The Hawk"). But most important among these recordings, was the LP, Ellington Uptown, which contained the Duke's *A Tone Parallel To Harlem*, a 14-minute work which is an acknowledged masterpiece.

The new year found Ellington into yet another cross-country tour. From Chicago to San Antonio and then up-and-down in California. Bellson recorded a small-group session for Norman Granz during this time and on Friday, March 14th, the entire orchestra did seven short films in seven hours for Snader Telescriptions. The titles were mostly well-known pieces from the Ellington repertoire, but also included the newer *V.I.P Boogie* and Bellson's *The Hawk Talks*.

Louis D. Snader made many hundreds of these 3 to 4 minute films which were sold as fillers to be plugged into empty air-time as then-young television stations were sometimes left with gaps in their programming. We are indeed fortunate that Snader filmed jazz groups along with the predominantly second-string popular, novelty and country entertainers of the day - from vocalist Jan Arden to violinist Florian Zabach.

The Snader sessions were done, and not even with a night off, during Duke's two-week residency at the Club Oasis in Long Beach, California.

The next night, Friday, March 21, Ellington played a one-nighter in Coquille, Oregon and the next day, arrived in Salem, Oregon to play a concert and dance.

Salem, Oregon - Saturday, March 22 - The Crystal Gardens Admission to Salem's Crystal Gardens dance hall was $2.00 - including tax - and with a 20¢ discount if you bought tickets in advance. The audience was promised to hear Ellington play his award winning songs. Besides the "James' Booty", Harry Carney, Ray Nance and Cat Anderson were advertised as featured musicians.

The Crystal Gardens was located at 210 Liberty Street SE at the corner of Liberty and Ferry Street - a few blocks west of Willamette University - and originally occupied both floors of the building. "Modern dancing was on the main floor and old time polkas, schottisches and two-steps upstairs." Today, the space is offered for rent as "Affordable, street level retail within the downtown core".

While Ellington expected his customers to dance, he also expected them to listen to some of his more ambitious art music - something that James or Basie or Goodman or any of the big bands, with the possible exception of Stan Kenton, would ask of their clientele.

CD1

While the Crystal Gardens was not distinguished in architecture, it contained some very distinguished music that evening. As Ellington was not a disciplinarian, he had musical ways of calling his band together. As the rest of the band unpacks their instruments and finds their places on the band stand, the Duke begins the set playing with bass and drums. How many in the audience knew the piece? It was brand new. What sounds like noodling is actually a set of variations on the main theme of **Fancy Dan**. After a bit more than a minute of this, Ellington quotes what would become known as *Band Call* - playing this riff four times through the harmonic circle before returning to *Dan's theme*. Now we hear some activity on the bandstand as a few musicians quietly check their horns. Duke returns to the *Band Call* riff, this time playing it modally (at the same pitch level) over different chords. With a few nods and "Ah, yeahs", Duke brings everyone together and the fanciness begins.

Paul Gonsalves is featured in the opening passage, which is a sort of one-chord prelude to the whole piece. Ray Nance responds to the opening riff and Duke's best saxophone section takes the bridge. Best? Didn't Duke always have the best sax section? Britt Woodman is the trombone soloist on open horn. At first he falls into the footsteps of his predecessor, Lawrence Brown - but the flurry of notes ascending into the trumpet register informs us that a new personality is working the slide. After a short unison brass riff, it sounds like a ghostly, aggressive "Tricky Sam" Nanton has hauntingly

joined the band. In fact, it is the plungered trombone of Quentin "Butter" Jackson showing that he learned his Ellington history well. Gonsalves returns with his prelude and after some spicy piano fills, the band wraps-up *Dan*. Duke then acknowledges his audience with a few words to introduce the rhythm section as he begins Bellson's ***The Hawk Talks***.

Besides Bellson's exciting drumming, Ellington's piano playing adds an element which no other band could provide to this composition. The trumpet soloist is Ray Nance again - who seems less comfortable with this kind of piece than the newest member of the trumpet section, Clark Terry, would have been -

Tenderly was composed in 1947 by Walter Gross with lyrics by Jack Lawrence. Perhaps Ellington felt compelled - or requested - to play this song because of Rosemary Clooney's hit recording released earlier in 1952. Willie Cook is the featured soloist in a role which derived from the "chair" established by Duke's very first trumpeter, Arthur Whetsol - that of the sweet horn. Like Whetsol, Willie Cook often played with a cup mute. But Cook plays in a decidedly modern manner - with at least a nod to Harry James. Also interesting is how Duke tries to conduct an on-the-spot head arrangement. At the end of Cook's first chorus, Duke shouts: "Do the uni-thing". Meaning, for the whole band to play the theme in unison as a background to Cook's second chorus. After a bit of stumbling in the background only a few players take up the idea - mainly the trombonists. By the third chorus, the saxes, lead by Jimmy Hamilton's clarinet get it together according to Duke's instruction: *"Way down"*. Later, *Tenderly* would become a feature for Hamilton - and with a much more secure head arrangement.

Frustration is a wonderful - and demanding - concerto for Harry Carney. Written in the mid-40s, this performance seems better than the first recording. Carney was an excellent reed player and always no less than perfect in technique and intonation - besides having the biggest tone of any who chose to play the baritone sax. What makes this performance better is the band's accompaniment. They are more relaxed, well balanced and nuanced than those who played on the first recording.

Was Willie Smith the best replacement for Hodges? Of course anyone who has other suggestions won't have to deal with the exigency which pressured Ellington to act quickly - and besides, wasn't it Tizol who made the call? Here is Ellington again respecting the conventions of the dance band leader - playing well known and perhaps requested tunes.

Vincent Youman's **Tea For Two**, with lyrics by Irving Caesar, was composed in 1925 for the musical show *No, No Nanette*. Harmonically, it is quite adventurous, but held together with a very singable melody. In one of his first recordings, Art Tatum added yet more to the harmonic labyrinth - and which Ellington acknowledges in his piano introduction. Smith plays the melody professionally - but without the passion of a Hodges and with a few small harmonic errors which some listeners may notice. Into his second chorus, Smith begins to expose his acknowledged technique, and by his fourth chorus, he is conjuring the command of his alto which we

associate more with the likes of an Earl Bostic. What the band plays behind Smith is yet another improvised head arrangement. After all, Duke announced the tune as *"a bit of jam routining"*.

Track six brings us to Billy Strayhorn's **Take The 'A' Train**. Duke again plays a remarkable piano solo - this time, three choruses. Ellington is certainly under acknowledged as a pianist. His creativeness is remarkable. And no matter how many thousands of times he and the band played Strayhorn's anthem, it never sounded tired. Ray Nance is the expected soloist playing the expected solo.

Perhaps to take some of the load off his musicians, the Duke plays an entire chorus of **Sophisticated Lady** before introducing Harry Carney - this time playing the soft and fuzzy-toned bass clarinet. A dramatic interlude sets an aggressive, if not frightening mood which then introduces Jimmy Hamilton. The storm passes and Willie Smith takes the last chorus with professional flair and perhaps feeling the pressure of having to measure-up to Hodges. It is certainly interesting to wonder what kind of story-line went through Strayhorn's mind when doing this particular arrangement. Often, titles of pieces can be misleading - and as we know with Ellington, titles were added after the piece was written. What would be said of this track if it's title were "Opus 86, No. 3, Andante moderato"?

Don't Worry 'bout Me was written in 1938 by pianist Rube Bloom with lyrics by Harold Arlen's frequent collaborator, Ted Koehler. A sentimental ballad, it was performed frequently by singers and instrumentalists ranging from Jo Stafford to Django Reinhardt. The arrangement is by Strayhorn and may well have been arranged for a vocalist, but re-cycled here to feature Clark Terry using a plunger mute in the first chorus and open horn in the second.

Perdido, as if we were lost, brings us back to Ellingtonia. Clark Terry is featured again and displays the various technical and musical features which distinguished him from other Ellington trumpet soloists - among them, double tonguing and fast, boppish runs. After the chorus featuring the harmonized trombone section, another contrafact - a word loved by academics to indicate a new melody written on an existing chord progression - appears. This one being a boppish line played in unison by at least Jimmy Hamilton, Paul Gonsalves and perhaps Britt Woodman. Surprisingly, bassist Wendell Marshall is given two choruses. In 1952, the double bass was not amplified and would have been very quiet in comparison to the whole big band. Of course, this excellent professional recording captures the bass very well and Marshall's volume is boosted to eliminate any drop in intensity. Marshall was a cousin of Jimmie Blanton's and we can hear clear references to Blanton's style and lines in this solo - e.g. *Jack The Bear*. Besides some aspects of technique, Wendell Marshall also inherited Jimmie Blanton's contrabass. The instrument is now at the University of Wisconsin and is sometimes loaned to students.

The last chorus of *Perdido* features Cat Anderson soaring over the orchestra. Certain parts of this arrangement were later mixed with that of Gerald Wilson and put together into one of the best known versions of Juan Tizol's composition.

Now that the dance floor is hot from happy feet and the band is cooking, Ellington smoothly introduces Paul Gonsalves to jazz-over a Johnny Hodges tune from the late 1930s, **The Jeep Is Jumping**. Claiming it to be a request and suggesting that dancers not change partners, Ellington turns Gonsalves loose for three choruses of improvisation. Gonsalves goes for a fourth chorus, but Duke signals the band for a return to the theme - another head arrangement - with the saxophonist quoting *Yankee Doodle* on the bridge, as if to remind us that this is truly American music.

Another Strayhorn arrangement of a non-Ellington piece brings Jimmy Hamilton to the microphone in a beautiful performance of **Deep Purple**. Pianist Peter DeRose wrote the piece as a piano solo in 1933. Because the melody was so singable, Mitchell Parish added words in 1938 and *Deep Purple* became a standard in the American popular song. Hamilton's performance is sufficiently romantic to inspire dancers into all kinds of action -

Puerto Rican valve-trombonist is next featured in the melody of his own 1937 composition, **Caravan**. This arrangement may have been written to celebrate the composer's return. It is certainly an exciting performance with the enthusiastic pounding on auxiliary percussion instruments by some of the horn players. Duke plays outrageous sweeping arpeggios on the piano and the solos, by clarinettist Jimmy Hamilton and Ray Nance scrapping and plucking incredible notes from his violin, take us on a journey far more exotic than the drab exterior of the Crystal Gardens.

Duke was great at solving problems. **Warm Valley** was written in 1940 to feature Johnny Hodges. It would have been cruel to send Willie Smith into the heat of the spotlight - but sending in Paul Gonsalves was brilliant. Comparisons were mitigated.

Duke tells us that his piece was written in the state of Oregon in 1941. If his memory lapsed in getting the year right, then perhaps he was wrong in telling us that the piece was inspired by the landscape he encountered during that earlier visit. Using an extended variation of his original introduction, Duke takes Gonsalves down in a journey to explore warmth and beauty as befitted the genesis of this wonderful composition.

With his commanding and muscular tone, Harry Carney introduces the complete melody of **I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart** . "Floor Show" - the nickname of Ray Nance - then steps up to the microphone to sing a complete chorus and divide the last one with a trumpet solo and a return to his exercising his vocal chords. Nance was a marvellous musician who brought both joy and depth to his performances. After the last chord, and to the accompaniment of two saxophonists practising in the background, Duke thanks his audience and allows them an intermission before the surprises he has ready to play in the second set.

CD2

Mood Indigo starts "in media res", the 1930 composition harmonized beautifully by the three trombonists. Although Russell Procope was born in New York City, he plays the clarinet with with a profound infusion of atmosphere emanating from the Crescent City, New Orleans. Certainly,

Procope was the replacement for Barney Bigard in that respect. Willie Cook offers two lovely, and muted, choruses followed by yet another "sonata" from the Duke on piano. One again, the balance on this recording needs to be praised - as does the general tuning of the piano. Almost 60 years later, we can hear everything -

Ever the diplomat, the Duke suavely informs the dancers that we are beginning "The Listening Period". Supposedly a request, Duke launches into a brisk-tempoed solo on **How High The Moon**, followed by the band playing Charlie Parker's contrafact (yes, you are now an academic) called *Ornithology*. Cleveland-bred Dick Vance wrote the arrangement. Vance was a trumpet player and highly respected musician who earned the confidence to assist Ellington in quite a number of arranging assignments- and even assisting in the composition of the *Jazz Festival Suite* written for the 1956 Newport Jazz Festival. Following the recording, we hear Paul Gonsalves rip through three choruses and then the whole trumpet section comes to the fore, trading 4s. That's musician talk meaning that each soloist gets four measures of improvisation and stepping back to allow the next soloist their 4s. The exact order of the soloists is difficult to discern because Ray Nance, Willie Cook and Clark Terry alternate through the four phrases of each chorus. That means that Cook begins the 2nd chorus and Terry the 3rd. Rather than trying to mix music with math, the best thing to do is just enjoy the battle - and afterwards, dust the testosterone out of your speakers. Not to be out done by anybody, clarinetist Jimmy Hamilton shreds everyone after restating the melody. Quentin Jackson was the trombonist who plays the brief solo before Gonsalves returns. And when the dust settles, the result is one of physical exhaustion driven by Bellson's energy and Vance's admittedly bombastic arrangement. Nothing is proven - except that we all need to have good times every once in a while.

A piece like **Monologue** or **Pretty And The Wolf** could only be presented at a dance date by Duke Ellington. Written, some say by Jimmy Hamilton, for two clarinets and bass clarinet with occasional bass and drums, the story is charming, funny, witty and engaging.

Duet is another remarkable piece of Art Music. Without words, it allows us to create our own story. Hamilton and the band swing like a well oiled gate. The composition and performance is perfect. Marshall's actual duet with Hamilton at the end would challenge any classical player. With three major changes, unfortunately not to be realized until ten years later, this became the band which ensured Ellington's status forever.

As with the other non-Ellington/Strayhorn heard on this set, the Duke's band takes on another quality - perhaps more regular and less individual in character. **Skin Deep** has many fine qualities as a piece - and as a composition which features the drums, it may be one of the best. It moves through a number of moods and tempos, showing that Bellson was just as accomplished as any other member of Ellington's Orchestra. And it should be noted here that Bellson used two bass drums. With a pedal on each one, he could articulate extremely fast strokes - approaching, in speed, to what one could do with their hands.

Blues At Sundown brings vocalist Jimmy Grissom to the mike in a sort of "One For The Road" mood. Grissom, a nephew of Dan Grissom, who was the vocalist for the Jimmy Lunceford orchestra, sang with the heavy toned voice typical of that which attracted many to the arc of the far more accomplished Billy Eckstine. Grissom is also represented in the next song from this set, Ellington's well known 1940s hit **Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me**. Little is known about Grissom - and that may be an index of his appreciation among music-lovers. As Grissom was with Ellington from 1951 to1958, one wonders what he did with all the time on the road when he was not singing with the band. Still, the audience gave Grissom a long round of applause -

Unusually, Ellington takes two choruses of **It Don't Mean A Thing** at a fast clip to introduce vocalist Ray Nance. Ellington had many arrangements of his most popular pieces and this one sounds fresh in many aspects. Also unusual is the tenor battle between Paul Gonsalves and Jimmy Hamilton. Hamilton, in contrast to his elegant playing on the clarinet was a rooty-tooter on tenor. It's Hamilton who let's out with the growls and squeaks.

Dancer's In Love, from the *Perfume Suite* (1945), is a wonderful set piece in which Ellington charms and engages the audience in having them participate by snapping their fingers three times during a series of breaks and then only twice for the ending. The Duke sets-up the ending in such a way that no one ever makes a mistake. And, of course, he praises them as would any master teacher in creating a safe and positive outcome for their students.

The Tattooed Bride - As befits the concept of "programme music", Ellington gave his audience the story - filled with wry and hip humor. After the orchestra's introductory passage, when Duke begins playing, we notice that the hour is late because the piano has slipped out of tune -

As the author of these notes, I would like to step into the commentary in a much more personal way, yet quote another writer extensively

In 1985, I participated in the Third Annual Duke Ellington Conference, Oldham, Lancashire. There I met a wonderful man named Eddie Lambert. Eddie was known to me as an author of a book and a number of magazine articles about Ellington. He was one of the conference organizers - and he was always around. I saw Eddie every day - and we talked extensively. Among the guests was Jimmy Hamilton, Bob Wilber and Allan Cohen. Bob was the leader of the conference orchestra and Allan had brought in a transcription for the orchestra to play - *The Tattooed Bride*. Jimmy Hamilton was the guest soloist. Without going into details about how thrilled we were to hear this music, I'll say, instead, that Eddie and I talked about this piece in depth and that I was taken by his perception and insights regarding all of Ellington's music.

Eddie told me about the comprehensive book he was writing. I was eager to read it. Sadly, Eddie died in 1987 - but his book was published just in time for Ellington's centennial - Eddie Lambert: Duke Ellington. A Listener's Guide, Lanham/MD 1999. Scarecrow Press.

I believe Eddie's words about the *Tattooed Bride* are wonderful and so, as a tribute to this great

Ellington scholar, I'd like to share them with you

The Tattooed Bride was premiered at the Carnegie Hall concert of November 13, 1948. in a performance issued on V-Disc. It was performed again at Cornell University on December 10. and both performances have been issued on LP. A one movement work, The Tattooed Bride runs for about twelve minutes. It is an exceptionally balanced and coherent piece of musical thinking. In his extended compositions Ellington liked to present contrasting thematic material. often inspired by the contrasts inherent in the idea behind the works. Examples include the varied aspects of African American life portrayed in Black, Brown And Beige or the contrasting impressions of The Deep South Suite. Although it has a literary "programme." there is no such diversity in The Tattooed Bride. The work is virtually monothematic, the structure being built from the four?note motif introduced by the piano at the outset. The twelve minutes of highly varied melodic development, encompassing several changes in tempo and instrumental texture, are beautifully paced and structured. Perhaps the simplicity of the story the work purports to tell, and its lack of "political" importance when compared with Black, Brown And Beige, New World A Comin', or The Deep South Suite allowed Ellington to concentrate more on the purely musical aspects of the composition. The Tattooed Bride also lacks the "thrown together to meet a deadline" feeling of either The Liberian Suite or the closing pages of Black, Brown And Beige.

When considering the "programme" of The Tattooed Bride, it is best to recall the scepticism which a study of the circumstances of the recording of Harlem Air Shaft casts on the "programme" of that work. When presenting The Tattooed Bride to his concert audiences. Ellington used two totally different introductions.The more elaborate one claimed that the piece described the early married history of an exceptionally athletic gentleman so devoted to hiking. swimming. and other outdoor activities that on the first two nights of his honeymoon he fell asleep the instant his head hit the pillow. The increasing tempo of the first part portrays his athletic endeavor, while the slow section which follows describes the third night of his marriage, when he discovers that his bride is tattooed from head to foot, the moment of discovery signified by the long held high note on the clarinet. This leads into the most warmly sensual part of the score, followed by a return to the extroverted music of the earlier parts, perhaps indicating that the hero's lifestyle was ultimately unaffected by his somewhat unusual discovery. The orchestra tell this story, which Duke described as a musical striptease, with wit and elegance, and the final chord is clearly the bow of a storyteller who has held his audience's attention with a well-told if somewhat outlandish tale.

Among Ellington's extended compositions The Tattooed Bride is unique in that it is conceived as a concerto for one of his sidemen, clarinettist Jimmy Hamilton. Two earlier works, Blue Belles Of Harlem and New World A Comin', were written as concertos for piano and orchestra. but the orchestral parts were mere backdrops, contributing little of importance to the musical argument: this became abundantly clear when Ellington began to play New World A Comin' as an unaccompanied piano solo. By contrast, The Tattooed Bride is a thoroughly integrated concerto for soloist and orchestra with the clarinet having the main voice in a basically orchestral argument. Both Ellington on piano and Lawrence Brown (here, Woodman) on trombone have roles of importance in The Tattooed Bride. There are also brief solo contributions from Baker (here, Cook), Procope. Sears (here, Gonsalves), and Carney. The role of the bass is quite crucial throughout. The use of Hamilton as featured soloist in this piece is a pattern which Ellington did not repeat in subsequent concert works. It may be that the strong personality which is the hallmark of most of the Ellington soloists would have created problems had he tried to use them in this way. Hamilton's virtuosity and imaginative musicianship are clear for all to hear: but he is not a strongly individual stylist, and his academic virtues make him a soloist better suited than most other Ellington musicians to the interpretation of a work in which the composer's personality is dominant.

Of the several recorded versions of The Tattooed Bride, the Columbia studio version of 1950 (included on the Masterpieces By Ellington Lp) is the best overall. Anderson leads the trumpet section in a fiery manner and Wendell Marshall's bass work is superlative, but it is the excellent recording quality which wins out over the rival versions. A very useful second recording is from the 1948 Cornell University concert. It finds the band in a very relaxed frame of mind and delightfully illustrates that Ellington's concert works are wholly of jazz, in that they lend themselves to a relaxed swinging interpretation, just as do his less formal pieces.

To bring the evening to a close, Ellington chose an arrangement of Irving Berlin's *Blue Skies*, written by the great pianist and composer, Mary Lou Williams. While Ms Williams can be short listed among the very best jazz composers, her writing - as that of Vance and Bellson - causes the Ellington band to sound somewhat generic. However, to understand her immense capabilities, listen to Williams' first masterpiece, the recording of *Walkin' And Swingin'*, recorded by the Andy Kirk band in 1936.

Nevertheless, *Blue Skies* is an exciting piece and subtitled **Trumpets No End** because of the manic succession of manic trumpet soloists - this time, including Cat Anderson. Curiously, Duke counts Wendell Marshall among the trumpeters -

Perhaps, because of the late hour, the performance seems to stop before it really gets going. Duke quickly segues into Strayhorn's theme and assures his audience, including us listening to the recording, that he could not love us more madly.

The dance/concert is over. The musicians pack-up their things. Perhaps they have a drink, talk to fans, chat-up an admirer, try to find something to eat. Eventually, they may sleep before they get into the buss or train on their way to the next gig. The previous week had been very busy. Perhaps they have Sunday off - because their next known performance is about a 90 minute drive north, in Portland, Oregon on Monday, March 24.

Evidently, the concert at Portland's Civic Auditorium did not go well. Tickets were $3.80 and according to Ted Hallock, writing for Down Beat magazine, hundreds (not thousands) in the audience were witness to a "tired" orchestra, led by a "rather gross, old man". But along with complaints about Gonsalves playing loud, repetitive tenor - "little better than Al Sears" - Nance's clowning, Hamilton's pre-occupation, trumpeters tooting higher than Canadian, Maynard Ferguson, Britt Woodman's "facile exhibition of how to play too many notes in too many bars", and wondering if Ellington is a "musical myth", like Shakespeare with a "Roger Bacon somewhere in the woodpile", Hallock reveals that 1) Duke is on a "new kick", modestly adding that "each performer 'loves you madly'", 2)

"Jimmy Hamilton had penned the melodic background for *Monologue*, without receiving credit", and most disturbing, 3) that Willie Smith had announced that he was leaving Duke to join Ellington inspired arranger/band leader, Billy May.

One wonders how Hallock felt about Ellington's accomplishments which were just around the corner - the return of Hodges, Sam Woodyard, Newport 56, *Such Sweet Thunder* - a few items in a huge list of significant achievements which would be realized over the next twenty years.

Tired, gross, pre-occupied or not, Duke's entourage hiked about four hours further north to play another concert, the next night, in Seattle's Civic Auditorium - with vocalist Betty Roché added to the line-up. This concert, also recorded by a fan, was eventually released by RCA Victor as one of the first "live recordings" issued by a major company. Much of the répertoire was the same as that heard in Salem, with the addition of the "Harlem Suite".

For the next few months, Ellington continued to tour the Pacific Northwest. On May 21, a letter was published in Down Beat. It came from one of Ellington's greatest fans and essentially said that Hallock seemed to have gone out of his way to "belittle a great man who has done more for music and the betterment of his race than few other men have." It was signed, Charles Mingus.

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Andrew Homzy is a distinguished academic, musician, composer and one of the world's leading authorities on the work of Duke Ellington. He has authored many publications and notes for CD issues including:

Duke Ellington and his Orchestra "At The Hollywood Empire 1949" **Storyville Records CD 8346**

Duke Ellington "Carnegie Hall, November 13,1943." **VJC1024/25**

Duke Ellington and his Famous Orchestra "Fargo,1940 Concert" **VJC1019/20**

"Black,Brown and Beige" The complete 1944-46 studio recordings **RCA Bluebird 6641/2/3.**

He directed the European Broadcasting Union Orchestra in a concert presentation of 100 years of Duke Ellington music in Montreal, and Quebec City, Canada 29/30,April.1999 with the highlights released on **JustinTime Records, 8476-2.**


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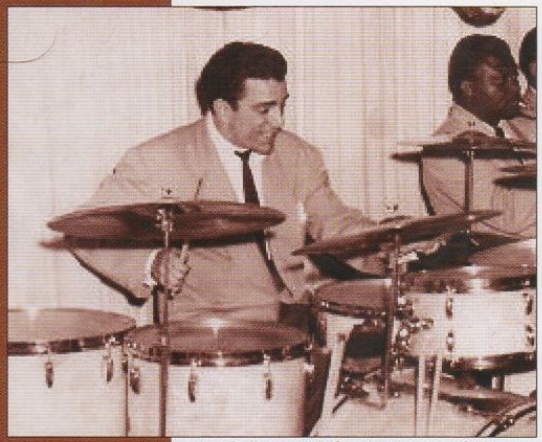

Louie Bellson and Cat Anderson 1952

Soloist Roll of Honour

with Cat Anderson, Louie Bellson, Harry Carney, Willie Cook, Paul Gonsalves, Jimmy Hamilton, Quentin Jackson, Willie Smith, Clark Terry, Juan Tizol, Britt Woodman.

CD 1

1.	**Fancy Dan**	5.37
2.	**The Hawk Talks**	3.17
3.	**Tenderly**	5.01
4.	**Frustration**	4.01
5.	**Tea For Two**	3.46
6.	**Take The A Train**	5.23
7.	**Sophisticated Lady**	6.38
8.	**Don't Worry 'Bout Me**	4.21
9.	**Perdido**	5.37
10.	**The Jeep Is Jumping**	3.04
11.	**Deep Purple**	4.09
12.	**Caravan**	4.29
13.	**Warm Valley**	4.50
14.	**I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart / Don't Get Around Much Anymore**	4.19

CD 2

1.	**Mood Indigo**	6.31
2.	**How High The Moon**	6.49
3.	**Monologue** *(aka Pretty and the Wolf)*	3.22
4.	**Duet**	3.34
5.	**Skin Deep**	7.32
6.	**Blues At Sundown**	3.11
7.	**Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me**	2.13
8.	**It Don't Mean A Thing**	7.09
9.	**Dancers in Love**	3.06
10.	**The Tattooed Bride**	13.09
11.	**Trumpets No End** *(Blue Skies)*	2.37
12.	**Take the A Train**	0.30

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