

Dear Collector,

It is our privilege to present these five volumes of Duke Ellington and his Orchestra which originated in the World Broadcasting New York Studios during 1943 or 1945. Duke Ellington never enjoyed his music being categorized as jazz or pop or classical, and he was correct in doing that. His voicings were unique, his melodies highly inventive, his rhythms infectious, and his approach to his musical mistress was his own: his music was *Ellingtonia*. And here in these five volumes are some wonderful examples of his genius as a music maker and composer offered on commercial recordings for the first time. We welcome *Ellingtonia* to our *Circle of Bands*.

— George H. Buck, Jr.

Circle CCD-101 through CCD-105 embody the complete Duke Ellington World Broadcasting recording sessions including the false starts, complete unissued alternate takes and those takes issued on World Broadcasting sixteen-inch (and later, twelve-inch) transcriptions. Commercial recordings made for sale to the public were not licensed for radio stations programming; transcriptions were and these Ellington performances, even in the choice takes, were never made available on 78 r.p.m. for public sale. Circle released these performances for the first time on a set of nine LPs beginning in 1985 and completed in 1989.

The November, 1943 sessions differ from all the subsequent Ellington sessions because World changed their recording session numbering system between November 10 and 15, and it was probably altered by Decca when World became a division. Let's examine take 5 of *Rockin' In Rhythm*: BB followed by a five-digit number was apparently assigned to each session, and this take comes from BB 37652. It is followed by -B which designates it was recorded on the second glass-base acetate of that session (They only recorded on one side of the acetate). That is followed by -C1 which indicates that it was recorded on control board and turntable 1 (Two turntables were used at all recording sessions for safety. An audible difference is often heard between C1 and C2 indicating there may have been two amplifiers and a different microphone positioning and type.) Early World did not designate *take numbers* and I have taken the liberty of assigning them for reference and sequence of the recordings. A limited number of pressings were made for listening to decide if the artist's and producer's "choice" was the best of the takes. Take five on the acetate has "choice" written beside it. Few of the test pressings are in existence. Since BB 37652 and BB 37653 sessions were both recorded on November 8, 1943, I assume there was a morning and afternoon session. (Continued on CCD-102)

— Wendell Echols

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA - 1943

Duke Ellington's World Broadcasting transcription recordings represent a vital section of his output in a very important Ellington decade — the forties. Many connoisseurs of Ellington music consider that the band reached its highest peak in the forties, and it is an unfortunate fact that for much of that decade it was kept out of the recording studios because of successive recording bans by the American Federation of Musicians which prevented its members making records for commercial release. These World Broadcasting transcriptions are studio recordings, but as they were for broadcasting use rather than for public issue, the ban did not apply. The issue of these CDs means that we can now hear the Ellington band of 1943 in studio conditions.

The Duke Ellington Orchestra re-commenced commercial recording in December 1944, but the 1945 World Transcription titles share many vital qualities with the priceless World 1943 recordings. One of these is that the three minute restriction of the standard 78 r.p.m. single did not apply to music recorded for broadcasting. World was already using a form of LP recording, which not only ensures a quality of recording way above the forties norm but also allows complete freedom in timing. Some of these performances run for over five minutes while others play for less than two; the music dictates the length here rather than mechanical considerations.

Although the Duke Ellington band was recorded more than any other jazz group, its leader was so prolific a composer that there was never room on recording sessions for all his new material. In the forties, when Ellington was enjoying one of his peaks of creativity, the recording bans meant that less than ever of his new material found its way on to record. Many of the compositions and arrangements heard on these World transcriptions are therefore issued for the first time in studio sound quality. Such new material is mixed in with versions of Ellington scores from the twenties, thirties and early forties, some

of which are very different to the more familiar recordings.

Duke Ellington opened his World Broadcasting programme with *Rockin' In Rhythm* and these three versions which he made gives us an opportunity to hear this important Ellington score played by the great band of the forties. They are wonderful performances, closer to the original 1930 recording in spirit than some later versions and each boasts a magnificent trombone solo by the great Tricky Sam Nanton. *Rockin' In Rhythm* is followed by the Mary Lou Williams arrangement of *Blue Skies* which later developed via one of those mystic Ellington transformations into *Trumpets No End*, a showcase for the solo talents of the Ellington trumpet section. Only one of these four attempts is complete and from that we learn that the soloists on this original arrangement are Jimmy Hamilton on clarinet, Lawrence Brown on trombone, Elbert Williams on tenor sax and Johnny Hodges on alto sax plus Taft Jordan on trumpet and Rex Stewart on cornet. Duke is clearly not satisfied and after the breakdown on the fourth take he is heard calling for the next number, *Boy Meets Horn*. The *Blue Skies* saga was continued later in the session with the fifth and sixth takes. *Boy Meets Horn* is a showcase for Rex Stewart's cornet, using the half valve devices which he had developed on the instrument. The piece was recorded originally in 1938 as one of a sequence on 'concertos' which Ellington was writing for his leading soloists. The version heard on the two takes here is longer and much superior to that on the original recording, Rex's droll humour and sharp wit being caught perfectly in this display of off-beat cornet virtuosity. The long coda, with its scarcely credible pedal notes, is an outstanding feature of this masterpiece of musical humour. The second take was used on World and it enjoyed a brief appearance on a war time V Disc, but the first take, like so many of the recordings in this series, appears here for the first time, having lain hidden and unheard in the vaults for over forty years.

Vocalist Al Hibbler was a comparative newcomer to the Ellington band when these late 1943 recordings were made, having joined in the August of that year. Two numbers featuring Hibbler are included in this first volume of

Ellington World Transcriptions. *Do Nothing 'Till You Hear From Me* is an adaptation into song form of Ellington's 1940 *Concerto For Cootie*. The theme statement on muted trombone provides a superb illustration of the lyrical side of Lawrence Brown's musical personality. On both takes, Lawrence plays the melody in a beautifully flowing fashion, while Ellington provides a characteristically rich orchestral backing. George Gershwin's *Summertime* is clearly a song which fascinated Duke Ellington, for he recorded it in several contrasting versions, of which this vocal arrangement for Al Hibbler is the first. As always Ellington's approach is one of freshness and individuality, qualities which are indeed keynotes of this entire collection.

Harry Carney's baritone is prominent in the orchestral backing to Johnny Hodges' eloquent reading of *Sentimental Lady*, an Ellington concerto which was soon to be transformed into the popular song *I Didn't Know About You*. Hodges gives ravishing performances on the two takes here, reminding us that he was one of the very greatest melody players in jazz; the brief cornet solo, which introduces an unexpected and contrasting mood, is by Rex Stewart. Taft Jordan is featured on *Tea For Two* which was one of a series which Ellington called *Variations On Themes*, versions of standards by other composers which were used as showcases for the improvisations of leading Ellington sidemen. On *Tea For Two* Jordan's trumpet tells a story in a flowing and swinging manner over a great rhythm section — notice the subtle drive of Sonny Greer's drumming. The orchestral accompaniment is notable for the poise of the section work and the unusual deployment of low register clarinets. In the sprightly version of Ellington's *C Jam Blues* which follows the soloists are Ellington, Jordan, Williams, Nanton and Hamilton. One of the notable features of this version is that each soloist has two choruses compared with one on the famous 1942 Victor recording. *Hop - Skip - Jump* is better known to collectors as *Rockabye River*, the title under which it was recorded commercially in 1946. This earlier version, taken at a slightly faster tempo and without the growl trumpet solos, is a lighter and more casual performance of the piece. The featured soloist is

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 The First Of Five Volumes In The Duke Ellington World Broadcasting Series
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 DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA - 1943
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(Recorded November 8, 1943, New York City)

1. ROCKIN' IN RHYTHM (BB 37652 - A Cl-1 unissued)	4:07
<i>(Duke Ellington - Harry Carney - Irving Mills)</i>	
2. Take two (BB 37652 - A Cl-2 unissued false start)	:12
Take three (BB 37652 - A Cl-3 unissued false start)	:13
3. Take four (BB 36752 - A - Cl-4 unissued)	3:52
4. Take five (BB 37652 - B Cl-1, World 6049-50)	3:52
5. BLUE SKIES (BB 37652 - B Cl-2 unissued)	3:11
<i>(Irving Berlin, arranged by Mary Lou Williams)</i>	
6. Take two (BB 37652 - B Cl-3 unissued incomplete)	:50
Take three (BB 37652 - B Cl-4 unissued incomplete)	1:18
Take four (BB 37652 - C Cl-1 unissued incomplete)	:42
7. BOY MEETS HORN (BB 37652 - C Cl-2 unissued)	4:43
<i>(Duke Ellington) featuring Rex Stewart, cornet</i>	
8. Take two (BB 37652 - C Cl-3, World 6022-3)	4:43
9. DO NOTHING 'TILL YOU HEAR FROM ME	:13
<i>(BB 37652 - D Cl-1 unissued false start)</i>	
<i>(Duke Ellington - Bob Russell) Vocal, Al Hibbler</i>	
10. Take two (BB 37652 - D Cl-2 unissued)	3:13
11. Take three (BB 37652 - D Cl-3, World 6502)	3:20
12. SUMMERTIME (BB 37652 - D Cl-4 unissued false start)	:23
<i>(George Gerswhin - DuBose Heyward) Vocal, Al Hibbler</i>	
13. Take two (BB 37652 - D Cl-5, World 6030)	2:55

14. SENTIMENTAL LADY (AKA: "HOME")	2:57
<i>(BB 37652 - E Cl-1 unissued)</i>	
<i>(Duke Ellington) featuring Johnny Hodges, alto saxophone</i>	
15. Take two (BB 37652 - E Cl-2, World 6031)	2:59
16. TEA FOR TWO (BB 37652 - E Cl-3 unissued incomplete)	1:37
<i>(Vincent Youmans - Irving Caesar)</i>	
17. Take two (BB 37653 - A C2-1, World 6029)	2:29
18. C JAM BLUES (AKA: "JAM BLUES")	3:03
<i>(BB 37653 - A C2-2, World 6909)</i>	
<i>(Duke Ellington)</i>	
19. HOP-SKIP-JUMP (AKA: HOP, SKIP AND JUMP")	2:37
<i>(BB 37653 - A C2-3, World 6019)</i>	
<i>(Duke Ellington)</i>	
20. BLUE SKIES, Take five	:28
<i>(BB 37653 - B Cl-1 unissued false start)</i>	
<i>(Irving Berlin, arranged by Mary Lou Williams)</i>	
21. Take six (BB 37653 - B Cl-2, World 6052)	3:10
22. MOOD INDIGO (BB 37653 - B Cl-3 unissued incomplete)	:42
<i>(Barney Bigard - Duke Ellington)</i>	
23. Take two (BB 37653 - B Cl-4, World 6032-3)	5:00

(Recorded November 9, 1943, New York City)

24. MAIN STEM (BB 37667 - A Cl-1 unissued false start)	:24
<i>(Duke Ellington)</i>	
25. Take two (BB 37667 - A Cl-2 unissued)	2:31

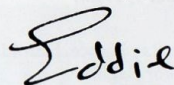
Johnny Hodges and his beautiful tone and peerless sense of swing are superbly caught here. The band were heard earlier this same day in four attempts to obtain a master of the Mary Lou Williams arrangement of *Blue Skies* which would satisfy the leader. The task is accomplished here on the sixth take in a version which omits the clarinet solo in the first chorus when compared with both earlier and later recordings. The soloists are Ellington himself, Taft Jordan, Lawrence Brown, Elbert Williams, Rex Stewart, Johnny Hodges and, more briefly than usual, Jimmy Hamilton.

The session continues, with a great version of *Mood Indigo*. Here Harry Carney makes one of his rare appearances as clarinet soloist as well as playing the clarinet part in the opening trio; Wallace Jones and Ellington also make vital solo contributions. Ray Nance and Harold Baker come in for Dizzy Gillespie for the second day of this 1943 recording marathon. *Main Stem* is a swinging up-tempo blues with a great Hodges solo and some mercurial Rex Stewart at the start. A poised Jimmy Hamilton is followed by two contrasting trombone soloists — Tricky Sam Nanton (muted) and Lawrence Brown.

When the recordings which make up this volume of the Duke Ellington World Broadcasting transcriptions series were made, the Ellington band had experienced what was for them an unprecedented number of personnel changes. Throughout the thirties, changes in the Ellington band were few and invariably big news in the musical press. Then within a period of less than three years Cootie Williams, Jimmy Blanton, Barney Bigard, Ivie Anderson and Ben Webster — all key personalities in the band — had departed and even Bigard's first replacement, Chauncey Houghton had come and gone (When the first of these two 1943 sessions was recorded both Ray Nance — who had replaced Cootie Williams — and Junior Raglin — Jimmy Blanton's replacement — were missing temporarily.) Most observers would have predicted a catastrophic decline given advance news of these departures in a band famous for its stability. But they would have underestimated Duke Ellington, for his contribution was far, far more important than that of any sideman no matter

how skilled. And Duke was always able to find musicians of suitable talent and the right temperament to replace his departing stars.

These comparatively rapid changes in the band continued throughout the forties — in 1944 Wallace Jones and Juan Tizol left, as did Otto Hardwick in 1946, the year in which Tricky Sam Nanton died. As Duke Ellington was no longer leading an ensemble consisting wholly of long-serving musicians the emphasis in his music changed — but it was a slight change which certainly did not affect the quality of his output. The individual musician was still paramount in his musical thinking and he still wrote for his own orchestra of strong personalities. But the intimate, chamber music like quality of much thirties Ellington music was modified into a more orchestral concept. This was the big band era and Duke Ellington and his Orchestra sounded like a big band. The front runners in the big band field gave healthy competition, but no one ever doubted that Duke's band was the best. And it remained the only one led by a composer of genius.



Eddie Lambert (1985)

Eddie Lambert, who wrote these enlightening notes for our Duke Ellington series, died of cancer in Oldham, England March 12, 1987 at the age of 56. All who knew Eddie are indebted to him for his many contributions as a lover of music and as a human being. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Elaine Norsworthy and hope she will derive comfort in the knowledge that Eddie's insight into the music and history of Duke Ellington that he has shared in these album notes has greatly enhanced the series and made it an even more indispensable set for the Ellington collector. We pay our tribute by dedicating this World Broadcasting Series of Ellingtonia to Eddie Lambert.

— Wendell Echols

PERSONNEL (November 8, 1943)

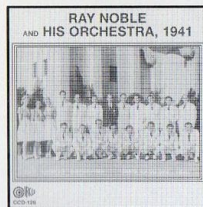
Cornet: Rex Stewart
Trumpet: Wallace Jones, Taft Jordan, Dizzy Gillespie
Trombone: "Tricky" Joe Nanton, Lawrence Brown, Juan Tizol
Reeds: Jimmy Hamilton (cl, ts), Johnny Hodges (as), Otto Hardwick (as)
Elbert "Skippy" Williams (ts), Harry Carney (bars)
Piano: Duke Ellington
Guitar: Fred Guy
Bass: Ernest Wilson Myers
Drums: Sonny Greer
Vocalist: Betty Roché, Al Hibbler

(November 9, 1943):

add: **replacing:**
Trumpet: Ray Nance, Harold Baker Dizzy Gillespie
Bass: Junior Raglin Ernest Myers
Vocalist: Ray Nance

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Text by Eddie Lambert
Art direction, Reg Stagmaier
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courtesy Bill Thompson
Back cover photograph from the Frank Driggs Collection
Produced by George H. Buck, Jr.
Production coordinator, Wendell Echols

CCD-126
RAY NOBLE AND HIS
ORCHESTRA 1941
SNOOKY LANSON



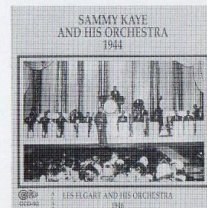
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JOHN KIRBY AND HIS ORCHESTRA 1940-41
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CCD-101



The First Of Five Volumes In The Duke Ellington World Broadcasting Series

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA - 1943



CCD-101

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA, VOLUME ONE

CIRCLE

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA, VOLUME ONE

CIRCLE

(Recorded November 8, 1943, New York City)

- | | |
|---|------|
| 1. ROCKIN' IN RHYTHM | 4:07 |
| 2. Take two | :12 |
| Take three | :13 |
| 3. Take four | 3:52 |
| 4. Take Five | 3:52 |
| 5. BLUE SKIES | 3:11 |
| 6. Take two | :50 |
| Take three | 1:18 |
| Take four | :42 |
| 7. BOY MEETS HORN | 4:43 |
| 8. Take two | 4:43 |
| 9. DO NOTHING 'TILL
YOU HEAR FROM ME | :13 |
| vocal, Al Hibbler | |
| 10. Take two | 3:13 |
| 11. Take three | 3:20 |
| 12. SUMMERTIME vocal, Al Hibbler | :23 |
| 13. Take two | 2:55 |

14. SENTIMENTAL LADY

(AKA: "HOME")

2:57

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2:59

16. TEA FOR TWO

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19. HOP-SKIP-JUMP

(AKA: HOP, SKIP AND JUMP")

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20. BLUE SKIES, Take five

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3:10

22. MOOD INDIGO

:42

23. Take two

5:00

(Recorded November 9, 1943, New York City)

24. MAIN STEM

:24

25. Take two

2:31

NOTE: Not all takes are complete performances.

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