

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.

World Broadcasting discontinued the BB numbering system, but only on the sessions discs, in November, 1943 and as far as I can determine (I may find new clues to change this any day now) the final number assigned a recording session in the New York studio is BB 37812 which was allocated to a Lani McIntyre session on November 18, 1943. Thereafter each tune was given a master number of its own at the time it was recorded and the session does not seem to have a number at all. Three prefix designations were used: N (meaning recorded in New York), L (Los Angeles studio), and C (Chicago studio.) The earliest New York number using the new system is illogically N-978, *Waltzing Matilda* which was assigned during a Josh White session on November 10, 1943. They may have just picked up the last three numbers of the BB number that would have been assigned under the old system. However, it shall remain a mystery for now because I do not think they used 166 numbers in the BB series after November 18. There must have been some confusion in switching to the new system ,but by December 1, 1943 and the Duke Ellington session, the numbering system has reached N-1055.

With the advent of the new numbering system for recordings made, the takes on the lacquer were identified by number and were given notations such as, N-1055-1 NG (no good), - 2 PB (poor balance), - 3 2nd choice, - 4 HOLD (Good), - 5 CHOICE. Incidentally, this is not the sequence on N-1055 — just used it as an example. I cannot determine if they were still using two control boards during recording sessions ,but it seems inconceivable that they weren't.

— Wendell Echols

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA - 1945

On previous albums we have heard Ellington originals dating back to the 1920's and the early 30's - *Creole Love Call*, *Rockin' In Rhythm*, and *Mood Indigo* are examples - and to feature numbers from the past in this way is standard Ellington practice. But in the infinitely more subtle matters of melodic material, style of phrasing and rhythmic approach, Ellington also uses materials from the past. An example is the way he wrote in the forties for the "traditional" voice of Tricky Sam Norton's trombone. Unlike other jazz figures, Ellington does not discard the old to make way for the new; in his music the two live together in a peaceful and mutually enriching co-existence. This is one of the reasons why Duke's music has as much variety and so much richness of expression. In these sessions the emphasis is on instrumental performances which are rather longer than would have been possible if these recordings had been limited to accommodate commercial release on the 10" 78 r.p.m. of the time.

Volume four of the Duke Ellington World Broadcasting Series concludes the sessions of January 2 and 3, 1945 and has two tunes in multiple takes from the July 31, 1945 session. This album opens with two additional Ellington "concertos" for soloists, both presented with two marvelously extended-length complete takes - Jimmy Hamilton in *Air Conditioned Jungle* and Rex Stewart in *Frantic Fantasy*. (Take one of *Air Conditioned Jungle* is on volume three.) The Rex Stewart feature displays many of the facets of the great cornetists style - the brilliant passage work and triple tonguing, the remarkable lip trills, the whimsical humour and the accuracy of Rex's own half-valve technique. It is a pleasant, if slight, example of the Ellington-Stewart combination and it really takes second place in this selection to the phenomenal version of *Boy Meets Horn* on volume one of this Series. No greater contrast can be imagined than in the concertos the warm red of *Frantic Fantasy*, the shadow blue seen through *Blue Cellophane*, the sensuous purple of *The Mood To Be Wooded*, the Johnny Hodges concerto included in volume three and the cool green, detached clarinet concerto for Jimmy Hamilton. This is a much earlier version of *Air Conditioned Jungle* than the previously released familiar one and the great craftsmanship and musical wit of Hamilton are well-supported here by Junior Ragland's bass and an appropriately sparse orchestral backdrop. It was not until I heard these performances that I recognized a strong similarity of tone and style exists between Hamilton and Artie Shaw. Interestingly, the World files state this composition is also known as *The Air-Minded Jungle*, but it was issued under its better-known title.

Al Hibbler records his first vocals for World since the November 8, 1943 session. Jimmy Hamilton plays the clarinet behind Al's vocals on *Don't You Know I Care?* while Johnny Hodges delineates the melodic contours of this little-known Ellington ballad after the vocal. The tune was quite popular, however, in 1945. The issued take three is clearly the better version, especially in Hodges solo. Two vocalists are heard on *I Ain't Got Nothin' But The Blues*, Al Hibbler who sings the lyric and Kay Davis who offers a beautiful wordless obligato. Jazz

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

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA - 1945

(Recorded January 2, 1945, New York City)

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|---|------|
| 1. THE AIR-CONDITIONED JUNGLE
(AKA "THE AIR-MINDED JUNGLE")
<i>(Duke Ellington)</i> featuring Jimmy Hamilton, clarinet
Take two (N-3001-2, World 7807-8) | 4:05 |
| 2. PITTER PANTHER PATTERN (N-3002-1 World 6913) <i>(Duke Ellington)</i> | 1:51 |
| 3. FRANTIC FANTASY (AKA "PRAIRIE FANTASY")
(N-3003-1 unissued) <i>(Duke Ellington)</i> featuring Rex Stewart, cornet | 4:18 |
| 4. Take two (N-3003-2, World 7702-3) | 4:24 |

(Recorded January 3, 1945, New York City)

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| 5. DON'T YOU KNOW I CARE? (N-3004-1, unissued)
<i>(Duke Ellington - Mack David)</i> Vocal, Al Hibbler | 3:02 |
| 6. Take two (N-3004-2, unissued false start) | :32 |
| 7. Take three (N-3004-3, World 6821) | 3:00 |
| 8. I AIN'T GOT NOTHIN' BUT THE BLUES
(N-3005-1, unissued)
<i>(Duke Ellington - Don George)</i> Vocal, Al Hibbler and Kay Davis | 2:42 |
| 9. Take two (N-3005-2, unissued false start) | :22 |
| Take three (N-3005-3, unissued false start) | :17 |
| Take four (N-3005-4, unissued false start) | :29 |
| Take five (N-3005-5, unissued incomplete) | 1:43 |
| 10. Take six (N-3006-2, World 6911) | 2:44 |

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| 11. BLUETOPIA (N-3006, unissued)
<i>(Duke Ellington)</i> | 4:14 |
| 12. Take two (N-3006-2, unissued false start) | :27 |
| 13. Take three (N-3006-3, World 7869-70) | 4:10 |
| 14. LET THE ZOOMERS DROOL (N-3007-1, unissued false start)
<i>(Johnny Hodges)</i> | :10 |
| 15. Take two (N-3007-2, World 7871-2) | 4:30 |
| 16. YOU NEVER KNOW THE THINGS YOU MISS
(N-3008-1, unissued)
<i>(Johnny Hodges)</i> | 1:39 |
| 17. Take two (N-3008-2, World 6912)
<i>(Duke Ellington - Billy Strayhorn)</i> | 1:38 |

(Recorded July 31, 1945, New York City)

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| 18. TEARDROPS IN THE RAIN (N-3513-1, unissued)
(AKA "RAIN IN YOUR EYES")
<i>(Willard Anderson)</i> | 3:10 |
| 19. Take two (N-3513-2, unissued) | :17 |
| 20. Take three (N-3513-3, World 7223) | 3:10 |
| 21. OTTO, MAKE THAT RIFF STACCATO
(N-3516-1, unissued incomplete)
<i>(Milton Orient - Si Schwartz)</i> Vocal, Ray Nance | 1:27 |
| 22. Take two (N-3516-2, unissued) | 3:05 |
| 23. Take three
(N-3516-3, World 7164-5) | 3:12 |

enthusiasts do not as a rule rate Hibbler's singing very highly, but it is worth noting here that he gets more from the lyrics of *I Ain't Got Nothin' But The Blues* than do certain more highly-rated singers who have attempted it in later years. In this version, the lazy, indolent tenor solo is by Al Sears and there is an important contribution on bass by Junior Raglin. Duke has problems with Nance's attentiveness to the score until the final excellent take which was the choice for issue on World.

Bluetopia is the second of two concert works commissioned by Paul Whiteman, the first being the *Blue Belles Of Harlem* of 1938. When *Bluetopia* is heard in this version by Ellington's own band, it seems hard to believe that it was written with another orchestra in mind. It is a typical Ellington concert piece with three distinct thematic groups. The soloists are Taft Jordan in the short trumpet passage near the start, Al Sears in an obbligato solo and Ray Nance plays the longer trumpet solo. There is also a brief but important "I ain't mad at you, you ain't mad at me" piano statement. The band voicing in the two full takes appear to be slightly different (it could be the result of microphone placement) and take one may be more successful in some sections, but the third take swings more freely and certainly is the more cohesive. Neither take sounds like a rejection.

Just as original and swinging in its own way is the quaintly-titled *Let The Zoomers Drool*, a straightforward arrangement on a thirty-two chord sequence. (The World engineer mistakenly understood the title to be *Lefty Zoomers Drool* and carved that into the margin of the glass-base disc.) This is a heavy swinger with rich sonorities and a tremendous build-up of section counter-riffing. Listen to the skilled use of the muted trumpets and open trombones as the low saxophones enunciate the main theme on the first chorus. The soloists are Sears, Hamilton, Carney, Ellington (who can be heard grunting with delight as he plays the bridge of the fourth chorus) and Cat Anderson, whose high shrill commentary is set against the rich, heavy sonority of the full band.


As always with the Ellington band, each section could call forth a seemingly endless variety of tone colours and combinations, while the music is played in that supple, singing manner characteristic of the best jazz of any school. In some bands with a strong rhythm section the horns sit back and coast along. This is not the case in Duke's band where every section swings powerfully. Nonetheless this rhythm section is a very strong one, an impressive blend of Fred Guy's steady chording, Junior Raglin's rhythmic vitality, Sonny Greer's inspired unpredictability and the leader's incisive, imaginative piano.

A further dip into the reference books fails to reveal a mention of *You Never Know The Things You Miss* ever having been performed apart from this one occasion and we have two similar, rather unimposing, takes. One chorus only is heard, all ensemble in which the lead alto of Otto Hardwick is unusually prominent. Johnny Hodges is credited with the melody composition.

The next item on this album is an unusually conventional arrangement for the Ellington band, but the group lend to it their unique orchestral style in a way which makes the

performance inimitable. This alternate title of *Rain In Your Eyes* seems a more appropriate one for the medium tempo swinger with solos from Al Sears, Junior Raglan, the pianist and importantly, a musician, whose versatility is too often overlooked. *Teardrops In The Rain* is listed in the World recording log as a composition by Willard Anderson.

Otto, Make That Riff Staccato is not an Ellington song but the crazy lyrics somehow suit the humours of Ray Nance perfectly and Duke has worked out a simple but highly effective arrangement on which the band swings powerfully. There is a characteristic contribution from Al Sears, but the highlight is the vocal trumpet duet between Ray Nance and Taft Jordan, a miracle of swinging empathy. The compact disc offers an incomplete take and a complete but unissued take of *Otto* and ends with the take World chose to issue for radio.



— Eddie Lambert (1985)

PERSONNEL (January 2 & 3, 1945)

Cornet: Rex Stewart

Trumpet: "Cat" Anderson, Shelton Hemphill, Taft Jordan, Ray Nance

Trombone: Joe Nanton, Claude Jones, Lawrence Brown

Reeds: Jimmy Hamilton (cl, ts), Johnny Hodges (as), Otto Hardwick (as), Al Sears (ts),

Harry Carney (bar. sax, cl, b-cl)

Violin: Ray Nance

Piano: Duke Ellington

Guitar: Fred Guy

Bass: Junior Raglin

Drums: Hillard Brown

Vocalist: Al Hillard, Kay Davis

(July 31, 1945):

Same except Sonny Greet replaces Hillard Brown on drums.

Originally recording by World Broadcasting System, Inc. New York City

Remastering by Jack Towers

Digital Mastering by Parker Dinkins for MasterDigital

Text by Eddie Lambert

Art direction, Reg Stagmaier

Cover photographs by William Gottlieb

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CCD-104 DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA VOLUME FOUR CIRCLE



The Fourth Of Five Volumes In The Duke Ellington World Broadcasting Series
DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA - 1945



CCD-104 DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA VOLUME FOUR CIRCLE

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Take two
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(AKA "PRAIRIE FANTASY")
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(Recorded January 3, 1945, New York City)

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vocal, Al Hibbler
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- 7. Take three 3:00
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BUT THE BLUES 2:42
vocal, Al Hibbler and Kay Davis
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NOTE: Not all takes are complete performances.

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