



DAVID MATTHEWS—piano
with
LEW SOLOFF, RYAN KISOR, JOE SHEPLEY,
SCOTT WENDHOLT—trumpets
JIM PUGH, LARRY FARRELL, BIRCH JOHNSON—trombones
DAVID TAYLOR—bass trombone
FRED GRIFFEN, JOHN CLARK—French horns
(CHRIS COMER replaces JOHN CLARK on #1, 2, 8)
TONY PRICE—tuba
CHRIS HUNTER—alto saxophone
AARON HEICK—soprano saxophone, clarinet
(LAWRENCE FELDMAN replaces AARON HEICK on #3, 4, 6)
ROGER ROSENBERG—bass clarinet
CHIP JACKSON—bass
TERRY SILVERLIGHT—drums
CHRISTINE SPERRY—vocal on "Come Sunday"
Arranged and conducted by DAVID MATTHEWS



Produced by SHIGEYUKI KAWASHIMA,
DAVID MATTHEWS
Executive Producers—HISAO EBINE,
YUKIHIRO HATTORI
Recording engineer—CHAZ CLIFTON
Assistant engineer—BILLY ERIC
Recorded at Warehouse Studio,
New York City; July 28 and 29, 1999.
Mastering engineer—KAZUHIRO YAMAGATA
Art direction—Jamie Putnam
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Photography—Takehiko Tokiwa

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The Manhattan Jazz Orchestra (MJO) was founded in 1989 with the release of its first album, *Mornin'*, so in 1999 it needed something special to commemorate ten years of superlative work. The perfect solution, *Hey Duke!* was the brainchild of MJO leader David Matthews, the inspirational jazz pianist/arranger—and lifelong admirer of Duke Ellington, perhaps the most beloved and respected jazz giant of the 20th century. As 1999 was also the 100th anniversary of the Duke's birth, Matthews decided to create an unforgettable tribute to the master by arranging many of his most famous pieces to reflect the varied talents of MJO.

Speaking of the Duke, Matthews says: "The year 1974 when Ellington died was also the year I began to perform with my band at New York's 'Five Spot' jazz club after working for five years as an arranger for James Brown's band. The year was memorable, but I must admit, at that time I couldn't completely understand the genius of Ellington. His ability dawned on me only slowly and it wasn't until I was studying Gil Evans's arrangements that I came to be able to recognize the full depth of Ellington's work. The Duke's music is, of course, very well known, but I feel that his true genius lay in his ability to spotlight the brilliance of individual players in his works. He established a band structure in which the total character of the band reflected the amalgamation of the individuality of each band member."

This delight in individuality is a critical aspect of Matthews's arrangements for MJO on *Hey Duke!* The album features Lew Soloff, Ryan Kisor, Chris Hunter, and Aaron Heick in arrangements that can definitely be said to be under the Ellington influence. Having said that, however, Matthews's arrangements are uniquely his own. He revels in his ability to encourage great jazz musicians to express themselves and their individuality. His arrangements show the importance of entertainment freed of theories, an ability he nurtured through years with James Brown, and afterwards as an arranger for such pop giants as Billy Joel and Paul Simon. Matthews's well-honed ability to entertain in the purest sense of the word is superbly exhibited on *Hey Duke!*

"Ellington's music has been recorded by most of the great jazz musicians," says Matthews, "and has, in fact, become a part of us all. However, I wanted to do arrangements that reflected my own personal view of the Duke and which differed from anything done before. I wanted this album to be unique while maintaining a clear sense of Ellington's originals. This is the mission of all true jazz musicians."

Hey Duke! is a genuine festival of Matthews's individual approach to music. Born of his clear adoration for Ellington, the album is crammed with new musical discoveries and adventures by great musicians who also obviously adore the Duke's work. But above all, throughout the album we can recognize Matthews's talent for individuality in his arrangements.

How does this supreme individuality come about? "When arranging," says Matthews, "I first extract the pure melody from the original music. After reducing the score to a skeletal structure or a group of notes, I decide beats and grooves, and create harmony, rhythm, and arrangement. I try not to be controlled by the lyrics and mode changes of the original version. I have applied this procedure naturally throughout my professional career, and it is routine for me to round out original versions depending purely on my inspiration. This is what I did with Ellington's greats. However, I have to admit that the constant rearrangements I had to do to avoid cribbing from earlier versions of the music was the hardest work I have ever done."

Such perfectionism, perhaps, explains just why this album is a veritable palette of Matthews's individuality. Uniqueness aside, however, the thread that is evident throughout all aspects of this album—from arrangement to production to recording—is Matthews's unadulterated love and respect for the greatness of the Duke.

"IT DON'T MEAN A THING (IF IT AIN'T GOT THAT SWING)"—The message of this piece, composed in 1932, can be taken as a synonym for jazz itself. Matthews made five different arrangements before finally choosing the version he wanted to record, which he liked so much that he listened to it 20 or 30 times in succession. His enthusiasm for the piece is reflected in his decision to place it as the opening number of the album. The soloists are Aaron Heick (soprano sax), Ryan Kisor (trumpet), and Chris Hunter (alto sax). Aaron, a saxophonist/clarinetist supreme, is well known through the TV show here *Meikyoku Monogatari* (The Story of Masterpieces), and although he has not been playing with David very long, he has become a staunch favorite of the arranger.

"PRELUDE TO A KISS"—This piece, a standard of female jazz singers, was first recorded in 1938. Matthews's individuality is clearly shown in the arrangement, which incorporates a sense of lightness without at all distracting the listener from the beauty of the original. Aaron's soprano sax solo is extremely impressive.

"MOOD INDIGO"—This masterpiece, composed in 1931, is from Ellington's early period and reflects what is often called "the color of jazz"—indigo. Listeners may be surprised by the eight-beat arrangement, which came about because, says Matthews, "of a brain flash that told me that the combination with a rock 'n' roll beat was fun." This is a fantastic arrangement of a wonderful piece.

"COME SUNDAY"—The piece, composed in 1945, is gospel at its greatest and is sung by guest singer Christine Sperry. The idea to ask Christine, an opera singer by training who had been working as a secretary in the office that deals with Matthews's publishing, was pure inspiration. If David had not heard her humming a song when he visited the office one day, he would never have recorded this piece, and we would have lost a great arrangement. The excellent trumpet solo is by Lew Soloff.

"SATIN DOLL"—This piece, composed in 1953, is one with which the Duke is most associated. The double-tempo arrangement is daring and showcases Matthews's superlative ability in arrangement. It features two outstanding trumpet solos, by Lew and Ryan, as well as Aaron's magical soprano sax solo.

"SONG FOR EDWARD"—This is the only piece on the album actually composed by Matthews, and is a heartfelt tribute to Edward Kennedy Ellington, whose refined, elegant, and dignified life led colleagues and fans to dub him "The Duke." The contemporary jazz style of the piece perfectly reflects Matthews's sense of individuality, which is crowned by an alto sax solo by Chris, who is truly in his element here.

"COTTON TAIL"—This piece, composed in 1940, featured the virtuosity of Ben Webster, a star of the Ellington Orchestra, and this arrangement, emphasizing the high notes of the trumpet in the melody, shows Matthews's arrangement skills at their strongest. Ryan's trumpet and Chris's alto sax solos are superb.

"IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD"—The album concludes with this jazz ballad masterpiece composed in 1935. With this arrangement, Matthews adds luster to the song's reputation, which already glitters from the Duke's original and a later great collaboration with John Coltrane. The atmosphere of the original is respected by Lew's rendition of the ballad's melody, on which, though, he stamps his own distinct personality. Lew is also well complemented by Matthews's sophisticated piano solo and Chris's alto sax solo.

—NOBUSHIGE TAKAI (September 1999)

1. IT DON'T MEAN A THING (IF IT AIN'T GOT THAT SWING)

(ELLINGTON-MILLS) DUKE ELLINGTON MUSIC/EMI MILLS MUSIC-ASCAP 6:54

Solos: Aaron Heick—soprano saxophone; Ryan Kisor—trumpet;
Chris Hunter—alto saxophone.

2. PRELUDE TO A KISS

(ELLINGTON-MILLS-GORDON) FAMOUS MUSIC/EMI MILLS-ASCAP 9:02

Solos: Aaron Heick—soprano saxophone; Lew Soloff—trumpet;
Jim Pugh—trombone.

3. MOOD INDIGO

(ELLINGTON-MILLS-BIGARD) DUKE ELLINGTON/EMI MILLS/INDIGO MOOD MUSIC-ASCAP 9:03

Solos: Lew Soloff, Ryan Kisor—trumpets; Chris Hunter—alto saxophone.

4. COME SUNDAY

(DUKE ELLINGTON) G. SCHIRMER, INC.-ASCAP 6:04

Solo: Lew Soloff—trumpet.

5. SATIN DOLL

(ELLINGTON) DUKE ELLINGTON-ASCAP 7:00

Solos: Lew Soloff, Ryan Kisor—trumpets; Aaron Heick—soprano saxophone.

6. SONG FOR EDWARD

(DAVID MATTHEWS) SETTING SUN MUSIC-ASCAP 4:50

Melody and solo: Chris Hunter—alto saxophone.

7. COTTON TAIL

(ELLINGTON) FAMOUS-ASCAP 7:01

Solos: Ryan Kisor—trumpet; Chris Hunter—alto saxophone.

8. IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD

(ELLINGTON) FAMOUS-ASCAP 10:49

Solos: David Matthews—piano; Chris Hunter—alto saxophone.
Melody and solo: Lew Soloff—trumpet.



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STEREO/AAD

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DAVID MATTHEWS & THE MANHATTAN JAZZ ORCHESTRA

