



# DUKE ELLINGTON

& his orchestra

## transblucency

Second volume of rare and previously  
unissued 1947 live recordings featuring  
Johnny Hodges, Harold Baker, Laurence  
Brown, Ray Nance and others



Like the previous volume (Jam-a-Ditty", Jazz & Jazz JJ-602) this record documents the engagement of the Duke Ellington Orchestra at Denver, Colorado, in July 1947, completing all the material available. It seems almost certain that four radio shows were recorded, all of which can now be found on the two "Jazz & Jazz" albums.

The transmission of the 9th of July opens with one of the most important arrangements of the period, that of "Overture to a Jam Session" from Billy Strayhorn which was one of the strongest numbers recorded for the Musicraft record company. Confronted with the 'official' version, this presents Ray Nance on the cornet instead of the violin, acquiring an unexpected effect.

In the following 'It Shouldn't Happen to a Dream' we discover the indefinable vocalist, Chester Crumpley. If his performance is not, certainly, at the level of that of Al Hibbler on the discographic version, his rendition doesn't damage the interpretation of the real protagonist of the piece: alto sax player Johnny Hodges.

Together with other important soloists, Hodges gets back to the microphone for the following 'One O'Clock Jump'. The well known signature tune of the Count Basie Orchestra was, at the time, quite frequently performed by Ellington, even though the first discographic version was recorded many years later. After the dynamic solos of Ellington, Sears, Brown, Hodges and Williams, the number closes as in the Basie version with the classic riff sequence in crescendo. Although different in character, this Ellington version is not inferior to that of the founder of Kansas City jazz.

To fill up the radio space left to him, Ellington, at this point, chooses to present his trio of arrangements of William Christopher Handy tunes, but, evidently, after having announced it, during the rendition he realized that there was not enough time at his disposition. Hence, "Memphis Blues" is missing.

"Beale Street Blues" which includes all three of the themes of the piece (more than often the first is not played) is longer than the R.C.A. version of the same period, which ended where here the trombone solo begins. Also "St. Louis Blues", sung by Ray Nance instead of Marion Cox, simply for this seems surprisingly new, even though the arrangement is basically the same.

The last live radio transmission from the El Patio Ballroom begins with the unusual choice of "How High the Moon". The famous standard highlights some of the most important soloists of the band. To me, the contribution of the trumpeter Harold Baker seems particularly brilliant.

"Transblucency" who's sub-title/explanation is "A Blue Fog You Can Almost See Through" is a refined musical construction. The starting point is a trombone solo recorded by Lawrence Brown in 1938 on the disc "Blue Light". Brown is still in the centre of the new arrangement, preceded and followed by the fine musical kneading of the voice of Kay Davis and Jimmy Hamilton's clarinet. After another version of the splendid "Jam-A-Ditty" (see the already mentioned JJ-602) it is the turn of Johnny Hodges in one of those marvellous melodies written especially for him by the Duke's right hand man, Billy Strayhorn: "A Flower is a Lovesome Thing". It is difficult to understand why Ellington never recorded this piece at the time (Hodges recorded it under his own name but without Duke). This version features excellently its author on the piano.

Even though in the following years the great classic "Rockin' in Rhythm" was played very often by Ellington, in the forties it wasn't so frequently performed. It is therefore quite nice to make the acquaintance of this dynamic version. As always Harry Carney, co-author of the piece, exhibits in a clarinet solo; the role of the much missed Joe Nanton is covered by the great trombonist Tyree Glenn.

The radio programme, and thus also the disc, closed with one of those tongue in cheek tunes which Ellington loved to leave up to the voice of Ray Nance: "Tulip or Turnip" a fitting finale full of good humour.

*Vittorio Castelli*

# DUKE ELLINGTON & HIS ORCHESTRA

## TRANSLUCENCY

- |   |   |       |
|---|---|-------|
| 1 | OVERTURE TO A JAM SESSION ( <i>Strayhorn</i> )<br>featuring Harold Baker, trumpet; Ray Nance, cornet  | 6'10" |
| 2 | IT SHOULDN'T HAPPEN TO A DREAM ( <i>Hodges - Ellington</i> )<br>vocal by Chester Crumpley, featuring Johnny Hodges, alto sax  | 3'00" |
| 3 | ONE O'CLOCK JUMP ( <i>Basie</i> )<br>featuring Duke Ellington, piano; Al Sears, tenor sax; Lawrence Brown, trombone; Johnny Hodges, alto sax; Francis Williams, trumpet | 7'20" |
| 4 | BEALE STREET BLUES ( <i>Handy</i> )<br>featuring Jimmy Hamilton, clarinet; Harold Baker, trumpet; Lawrence Brown, trombone; Ray Nance, cornet                           | 3'45" |
| 5 | ST. LOUIS BLUES ( <i>Handy</i> )<br>vocal by Ray Nance  | 2'55" |

*Recorded live at El Patio Ballroom, Denver, July 9, 1947*

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|----|---|-------|
| 6  | HOW HIGH THE MOON (Lewis - Hamilton)<br>featuring Duke Ellington, piano; Harold Baker, trumpet; Jimmy Hamilton, clarinet; Lawrence Brown, trombone; Al Sears, tenor sax; Harry Carney, baritone sax | 5'26" |
| 7  | TRANSLUCENCY ( <i>Ellington - Brown</i> )<br>vocal by Kay Davis, featuring Jimmy Hamilton, clarinet; Lawrence Brown, trombone   | 3'50" |
| 8  | JAM-A-DITTY ( <i>Ellington</i> )<br>featuring Duke Ellington, piano; Harold Baker, trumpet; Lawrence Brown, trombone; Harry Carney, baritone sax; Jimmy Hamilton, clarinet                          | 3'00" |
| 9  | A FLOWER IS A LOVESOME THING ( <i>Strayhorn</i> )<br>featuring Johnny Hodges, alto sax; Billy Strayhorn, piano  | 4'00" |
| 10 | ROCKIN' IN RHYTHM ( <i>Ellington - Carney</i> )<br>featuring Harry Carney, clarinet; Tyree Glenn, trombone  | 4'40" |
| 11 | TULIP OR TURNIP ( <i>Ellington - George</i> )<br>vocal by Ray Nance, featuring Lawrence Brown, trombone; Ray Nance, cornet  | 2'52" |

*Recorded live at El Patio Ballroom, Denver, July 11, 1947*

### DUKE ELLINGTON and His Orchestra

Shelton Hemphill, Francis Williams, Harold Baker, Wilbur Bascomb (*trumpet*); Ray Nance (*cornet*); Lawrence Brown, Tyree Glenn, Claude Jones (*trumpet*); Johnny Hodges, Russell Procope, Al Sears, Jimmy Hamilton, Harry Carney (*reeds*); Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn (*piano*); Fred Guy (*guitar*); Oscar Pettiford (*bass*); Sonny Greer (*drums*); Chester Crumpley, Ray Nance, Kay Davis (*vocal*).

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**CDJJ-612**

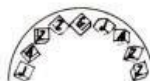
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## TRANSBLUCENCY



COMPACT  
disc  
DIGITAL AUDIO

CDJJ-612



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Series coordinator Gigi De Leo



RECORDS

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