

**NAXOS**  
**JAZZ**  
LEGENDS

# DUKE ELLINGTON

*Classic Recordings*  
*Vol.4: 1936-1938*

## **ECHOES OF HARLEM**



# DUKE ELLINGTON *Vol. 4*

## ‘Echoes of Harlem’ Original Recordings 1936-1938

By the early 1930s Duke was established as a top bandleader, a celebrated arranger and a respected composer in his own right, and would in all probability have preferred the more creative route of ‘serious’ jazz, suites and the like. However, with the swathes of Swing which followed Benny Goodman’s breakthrough at the Palomar in Los Angeles in August 1935, the Ellington Orchestra, notwithstanding its great ensemble, virtually overnight joined a growing legion of bands vying to cash in on the new big band craze and from 1936 a combination of factors, some personal, some economic, forced Ellington to adopt a more commercial approach.

Born 29 April 1899 in Washington, DC, White House butler’s son Edward Kennedy Ellington enjoyed the benefits of a genteel, respectable upbringing and education. After his first piano lessons at seven, he was inspired to study and master harmony and by his teens was already honing tunes for his instrument and had made the Howard Theatre a “second home” where he could feast his ears and eyes on the “acrobatic” playing of Luckey Roberts and other exemplars of post-ragtime stride. His father, James Edward Ellington, hoped that his son would keep the piano as a pastime and become a professional graphic artist instead. Duke left technical college in 1917 and briefly ran his own sign-painting business but later that year made his solo piano debut and was soon gigging in Louis Thomas’s

band at society venues. In 1918, he formed a trio, Duke’s Serenaders, which offered sophisticated jazz to Washington’s “select patrons” and in 1922 he moved to New York where he could observe at closer quarters the stride playing of James P. Johnson and Willie ‘The Lion’ Smith.

By the close of 1923 he had formed the Washingtonians with trio colleague Elmer Snowden (1900-1973) and scored the revue *Chocolate Kiddies*. By the late 1920s the all-black Ellington outfit had become a society band par excellence, virtually exclusive to prestigious venues whose all-white clientele were not inclined to fraternise with Negroes. However, through his residencies at New York’s Holiday Inn (and, briefly, the Kentucky on 49th Street and Broadway) and wider exposure on radio, he was able, without abandoning his ‘Jungle’-style hot jazz trademark, to exploit the public’s growing interest in dance music. At the Cotton Club, his elegant twelve-piece largely satisfied a demand for both and a string of hits, beginning in 1930 with **Mood Indigo**, secured his name. By the time ‘Harlem’s Aristocrat of Jazz’ had left to tour the States in early 1931, it not only catered to the dance market but was also a top concert attraction. Salaried on a par “approximately equal to the best symphonic wages” it grossed almost \$50,000 per week and, while breaking all previous box-office records, offered the more thoughtful listener essays in instrumental tone-

painting through which, Duke hoped, jazz might finally acquire a certain merited dignity.

The period from 1931 was to prove the most productive of Ellington's career, a unique phase of creativity and activity. By late 1933 again briefly ensconced in the security of the Cotton Club, his band – now augmented to six brass, four reeds plus a four-man rhythm section – had traversed the USA from coast to coast and taken Europe and London by storm and already, during 1934, so many outstanding Ellington numbers of the three-minute pop-tune variety (charted versions of 'Creole Rhapsody', and 'Rose Room', for example) were beginning to trigger almost equal sales of certain items more accurately classified as non-dancing mood-music. From 1934 Duke's successes on shellac veered more significantly towards the commercial, with versions of 'Cocktails For Two' and 'Moon Glow' charting respectively at No.1 and No.2). Additionally, a number of more esoteric Ellington compositions, jazz tone-paintings including 'Daybreak Express' (a No.20 in February 1934), 'Merry-Go-Round' (a No.6 in June 1935), 'In A Sentimental Mood' (a No.14 in July 1935) and 'Reminiscing In Tempo' (all featured in Vol. 3: *Reminiscing in Tempo*, Naxos Jazz Legends 8.120589) prompted John Hammond to remark (in *Downbeat* magazine) that his latest records on Brunswick 'had hardly any of the old-time Ellington sincerity and originality' while urging his fans to rush out and 'buy them all' – regardless.

To make money, while doing justice to jazz and to his own creative status within the genre, soon

became Ellington's dilemma – a challenge he solved in part by more overt displays of showmanship, living proof that not only was he in fashion, but his crew were all virtuosos not to be found in common or garden swing-bands. During 1936 a triptych of recordings casting a spotlight on his key sidemen made the US popular Top 30 charts: **Clarinet Lament** (featuring Barney Bigard) at No.12, **Yearning For Love** (featuring Lawrence Brown) at No.16 and **Echoes Of Harlem** (featuring Cootie Williams) at No.19 – and Duke's own piano solo versions of **Mood Indigo**, **Solitude**, **Sophisticated Lady** and **In A Sentimental Mood** revived some recent Ellington landmarks while providing a reminder of his own prowess as a performer.

In March 1937 Duke made a further return to the Cotton Club (in a *Cotton Club Parade* revue featuring Ethel Waters), by July sheet-sales of his No.4 hit **Caravan** had made it a top American best-seller and in September his recordings of **Diminuendo In Blue** and **Cresendo In Blue** reassured the jazz buffs that his penchant for innovative tone-painting remained untarnished. During that year, to prove that he was *au fait* with Swing and could hold his own with dance bands, he appeared in the promotional film *The Hit Parade* (a behind-the-scenes drama for Republic, this also featured the Eddie Duchin Orchestra) and produced further hits, notably **Scattin' At The Kit-Kat** (No.9), 'Azure' (No.13), **All God's Chillun Got Rhythm** (No.14) and **The New East St. Louis Toodle-Oo** (No.16).

*Peter Dempsey, 2003*

## Personnel

*20 January 1936:* **Arthur Whetsel**, Cootie Williams, trumpets; **Rex Stewart**, cornet; **Joe Nanton**, trombone; **Juan Tizol**, valve trombone; **Barney Bigard**, clarinet; **Johnny Hodges**, clarinet, soprano & alto sax; **Harry Carney**, clarinet, alto & baritone sax; **Otto Hardwick**, alto & bass sax; **Duke Ellington**, piano; **Fred Guy**, guitar; **Billy Taylor**, bass; **Sonny Greer**, drums

*27 February 1936:* **Arthur Whetsel**, Cootie Williams, trumpets; **Rex Stewart**, cornet; **Joe Nanton**, **Lawrence Brown**, trombones; **Juan Tizol**, valve trombone; **Barney Bigard**, clarinet; **Johnny Hodges**, clarinet, soprano & alto sax; **Harry Carney**, clarinet, alto & baritone sax; **Duke Ellington**, piano; **Fred Guy**, guitar; **Hayes Alvis**, bass; **Sonny Greer**, drums

*28 February 1936:* **Arthur Whetsel**, Cootie Williams, trumpets; **Rex Stewart**, cornet; **Joe Nanton**, trombone; **Juan Tizol**, valve trombone; **Barney Bigard**, clarinet; **Johnny Hodges**, clarinet, soprano & alto sax; **Harry Carney**, clarinet, alto & baritone sax; **Pete Clark**, alto sax; **Duke Ellington**, piano; **Fred Guy**, guitar; **Billy Taylor**, **Hayes Alvis**, bass; **Sonny Greer**, drums

*17 July 1936 & 5 March 1937:* **Arthur Whetsel**, Cootie Williams, trumpets; **Rex Stewart**, cornet; **Joe Nanton**, **Lawrence Brown**, trombones; **Juan Tizol**, valve trombone; **Barney Bigard**, clarinet; **Johnny Hodges**, clarinet, soprano & alto sax; **Harry Carney**, clarinet, alto & baritone sax; **Otto Hardwick**, alto & bass sax; **Duke Ellington**, piano; **Fred Guy**, guitar; **Hayes Alvis**, **Billy Taylor**, bass; **Sonny Greer**, drums

*29 July 1936:* **Arthur Whetsel**, Cootie Williams, trumpets; **Rex Stewart**, cornet; **Joe Nanton**, **Lawrence Brown**, trombones; **Juan Tizol**, valve trombone; **Barney Bigard**, clarinet; **Johnny Hodges**, clarinet, soprano & alto sax; **Harry Carney**, clarinet, alto & baritone sax; **Otto Hardwick**, alto & bass sax; **Ben Webster**, tenor sax; **Duke Ellington**, piano; **Fred Guy**, guitar; **Hayes Alvis**, **Billy Taylor**, bass; **Sonny Greer**, drums

*21 December 1936:* **Duke Ellington**, piano solo

*14 May & 8 June 1937:* **Wallace Jones**, Cootie Williams, trumpets; **Rex Stewart**, cornet; **Joe Nanton**, **Lawrence Brown**, trombones; **Juan Tizol**, valve trombone; **Barney Bigard**, clarinet; **Johnny Hodges**, clarinet, soprano & alto sax; **Harry Carney**, clarinet, alto & baritone sax; **Otto Hardwick**, alto & bass sax; **Duke Ellington**, piano; **Fred Guy**, guitar; **Hayes Alvis**, **Billy Taylor**, bass; **Sonny Greer**, drums

*20 September 1937:* **Wallace Jones**, Cootie Williams, trumpets; **Rex Stewart**, cornet; **Joe Nanton**, **Lawrence Brown**, trombones; **Barney Bigard**, clarinet; **Johnny Hodges**, clarinet, soprano & alto sax; **Harry Carney**, clarinet, alto & baritone sax; **Otto Hardwick**, alto & bass sax; **Duke Ellington**, piano; **Fred Guy**, guitar; **Billy Taylor**, bass; **Sonny Greer**, drums

*13 January 1938:* **Wallace Jones**, Cootie Williams, **Harold Baker**, trumpets; **Rex Stewart**, cornet; **Joe Nanton**, **Lawrence Brown**, trombones; **Barney Bigard**, clarinet; **Johnny Hodges**, clarinet, soprano & alto sax; **Harry Carney**, clarinet, alto & baritone sax; **Otto Hardwick**, alto & bass sax; **Duke Ellington**, piano; **Fred Guy**, guitar; **Hayes Alvis**, **Billy Taylor**, bass; **Sonny Greer**, drums

1. **Clarinet Lament (Barney's Concerto)** 3:08  
(Duke Ellington-Barney Bigard)  
Brunswick 7650, mx B 18736-1  
Recorded 27 February 1936, New York
2. **Echoes Of Harlem (Cootie's Concerto)** 3:00  
(Duke Ellington)  
Brunswick 7650, mx B 18737-1  
Recorded 27 February 1936, New York
3. **I Don't Know Why I Love You So** 3:03  
(Duke Ellington-Irving Mills)  
Columbia 37296, mx C 1199-1  
Recorded 20 January 1936, Chicago
4. **Kissin' My Baby Good-Night** 3:12  
(Mack David-George W. Meyer-Pete Wendling)  
Ivie Anderson, vocal  
Brunswick 7627, mx B 18739-1  
Recorded 28 February 1936, New York
5. **Yearning For Love (Lawrence's Concerto)** 2:50  
(Duke Ellington-Irving Mills-Mitchell Parish)  
Brunswick 7752, mx B 19565-2  
Recorded 17 July 1936, New York
6. **Trumpet In Spades (Rex's Concerto)** 3:05  
(Duke Ellington)  
Brunswick 7752, mx B 19564-1  
Recorded 17 July 1936, New York
7. **It Was A Sad Night In Harlem** 2:52  
(Al Lewis-Helmy Kresa)  
Ivie Anderson, vocal  
Brunswick 7710, mx B 19563-1  
Recorded 17 July 1936, New York
8. **Exposition Swing** 3:09  
(Duke Ellington)  
Brunswick m8213, mx B 19627-1  
Recorded 29 July 1936, New York
9. **Mood Indigo<sup>1</sup>—Solitude<sup>2</sup>** 3:05  
<sup>1</sup>(Duke Ellington-Irving Mills-Barney Bigard)  
<sup>2</sup>(Duke Ellington-Irving Mills-Eddie deLange)  
Duke Ellington, piano solo  
Master MA 102, mx L 0377-1  
Recorded 21 December 1936, Hollywood
10. **Sophisticated Lady—In A Sentimental Mood** 3:03  
(Duke Ellington-Mitchell Parish-Irving Mills)  
Duke Ellington, piano solo  
Master MA 102, mx L 0378-1  
21 December 1936, Hollywood
11. **The New Birmingham Breakdown** 2:46  
(Duke Ellington)  
Master MA 123, mx M 177-1  
Recorded 5 March 1937, New York
12. **Scattin' At The Kit Kat** 2:42  
(Duke Ellington-Irving Mills)  
Master MA 123, mx M 178-1  
Recorded 5 March 1937, New York
13. **I've Got To Be A Rug Cutter** 2:33  
(Duke Ellington)  
Ivie Anderson, Rex Stewart, Harry Carney, Hayes Alvis, vocal; Freddy Jenkins, tap dancing  
Master MA 101, mx M 179-1  
Recorded 5 March 1937, New York
14. **The New East St. Louis Toodle-O** 2:59  
(Duke Ellington-Bubber Miley)  
Master MA 101, mx M 180-1  
Recorded 5 March 1937, New York

15. **Caravan** 2:39  
(Juan Tizol–Duke Ellington–Irving Mills)  
Master MA 131, mx M 470-2  
Recorded 14 May 1937, New York
16. **All God's Chillun Got Rhythm** 2:41  
(Gus Kahn–Bronislaw Kaper–Walter Jurmann)  
Master MA 137, mx M 519-1  
Recorded 8 June 1937, New York
17. **Prologue To Black & Tan Fantasy** 2:33  
(Duke Ellington–Bubber Miley)  
Brunswick m8256, mx M 714-1  
Recorded 13 January 1938, New York
18. **The New Black & Tan Fantasy** 2:39  
(Duke Ellington–Bubber Miley)  
Brunswick m8256, mx M 715-1  
Recorded 13 January 1938, New York
19. **Diminuendo In Blue** 2:43  
(Duke Ellington)  
Brunswick m8004, mx M 648-1  
Recorded 20 September 1937, New York
20. **Crescendo In Blue** 3:15  
(Duke Ellington)  
Brunswick m8004, mx M 649-1  
Recorded 20 September 1937, New York
- Duke Ellington & His Famous Orchestra  
Transfers & Production: David Lennick  
Digital Noise Reduction: Graham Newton  
Original 78s from the collections of David Lennick and Eugene Miller
- Original monochrome photo of Duke Ellington from Max Jones Files / Redferns

*Also available in the Naxos Jazz Legends series ...*



8.120589\*



8.120662\*



8.120672

\* Not available in the USA

8.120682

DUKE ELLINGTON Echoes of Harlem

NAXOS JAZZ LEGENDS

**DUKE ELLINGTON** *Vol. 4***"ECHOES OF HARLEM" Original 1936-1938 Recordings**

8.120682

1. Clarinet Lament (Barney's Concerto) 3:08
2. Echoes Of Harlem (Cootie's Concerto) 3:00
3. I Don't Know Why I Love You So 3:03
4. Kissin' My Baby Good-Night 3:12
5. Yearning For Love (Lawrence's Concerto) 2:50
6. Trumpet In Spades (Rex's Concerto) 3:05
7. It Was A Sad Night In Harlem 2:52
8. Exposition Swing 3:09
9. Mood Indigo—Solitude 3:05
10. Sophisticated Lady—In A Sentimental Mood 3:03
11. The New Birmingham Breakdown 2:46
12. Scattin' At The Kit Kat 2:42
13. I've Got To Be A Rug Cutter 2:33
14. The New East St Louis Toodle-o 2:59
15. Caravan 2:39
16. All God's Chillun Got Rhythm 2:41
17. Prologue To Black & Tan Fantasy 2:33
18. The New Black & Tan Fantasy 2:39
19. Diminuendo In Blue 2:43
20. Crescendo In Blue 3:15



Transfers and Production by David Lennick  
 Digital Noise Reduction by Graham Newton

**NOTES AND FULL RECORDING DETAILS INCLUDED****www.naxos.com**

MADE IN E.C.

© &amp; © 2003 HNH International Ltd

Design: Ron Hoares

Total Time 59:00
------------------------

ADD
-----



NAXOS JAZZ LEGENDS

DUKE ELLINGTON Echoes of Harlem

8.120682