

afterwards was the kick on the sixth beat." The spirited but intricate arrangement requires an interchange of musical progressions by the section, thinning out to a statement by Hamilton and Carney on clarinet and baritone saxophone respectively.

The band reached Baghdad just in time for a military coup, during which jets shot up the presidential palace. Later, when he arrived safely in Beirut, the press eagerly sought Ellington's reaction to the experience. "Baghdad?" he said, in a much-quoted reply. "It was swinging!" In striking contrast with this excitement was his first view of Mount Harissa, fifteen miles from Beirut. Crowned by the huge statue of Our Lady of Lebanon, this inspired the 'serene and swinging *Mount Harissa*, on which his piano and Paul Gonsalves' tenor saxophone are so handsomely featured.

Blue Pepper, or *Far East of the Blues*, speaks of the universality of the blues. The title might also be a subtle reminder of the time when pepper—to the West—was a luxury import from the East. The definitive solo statement is made by Johnny Hodges, whose muse here differs from that in *Isfahan*.

Agra, Ellington explains, "is our portrait of the Taj Mahal, but we take in a little more territory than that marble edifice dedicated to the tremendous love for a beautiful woman. We consider the room in which the man who built it was imprisoned by his son. For the rest of his life he was forced to live there and look out—at the Taj Mahal." Harry Carney, the nonpareil of the baritone saxophone, imparts great distinction to the noble theme.

Amad is a surging damascene sketch with closely woven writing for the reeds, Lawrence Brown's call to prayer, and the leader's insistent piano emphases. The treatment is relevant to another of Ellington's observations about the State Department tour: "We didn't write for two months afterwards," he said, "because we didn't want to do anything others had done before. The supporting ornamentation behind the main themes is general in color for the whole trip, from Turkey to Ceylon."

This clearly does not apply to *Ad Lib on Nippon*, a long performance with displays of virtuosity by John Lamb and Jimmy Hamilton. The maestro also digs in, perhaps remembering "some cats in Tokyo who were too much." Japan, he claims, sometimes frightens him, "because they have an ability there to do things better than the originals."

Some originals. Not these originals.

Stanley Dance, 1967



School
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THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

presents

STUDIO JAZZ ENSEMBLE I
Roy Cummings, *director*

STUDIO JAZZ ENSEMBLE II
Michael Van Bebber, *director*

featuring a performance of
THE FAR EAST SUITE
by
Duke Ellington

8:00 PM
June 2, 1999
Meany Theater

S90
1999
6-2

DAT 13,509

STUDIO JAZZ ENSEMBLE II

Michael Van Bebber, *director*

CD 13,510

[1] comments

[4] DOWN FOR THE COUNT... (4:56).....Frank Foster

[2] WITCHCRAFT... (2:38)..... Leigh/Coleman (arr. Sam Nestico)

[6] AFTERGLOW... (4:26).....Don Schamber

[5] US... (3:27).....Thad Jones

[3] PERDIDO... (2:53)..... Drake/Tizol (arr. Dave Wolpe)

[7] BASIE STRAIGHT AHEAD... (3:12).....Nestico

SAXOPHONE

Kathy Smith
Amanda Montgomery
R. J. Weddle
Benjamin Beebe
Eric Peterson

TRUMPET

Tyson Sterne
Josh Pfeiffer
Bill Little
Sam Wilson
George Meaders

TROMBONES

Michael Leone
Dennis Asis
Eric Viegas
David Hughes

RHYTHM SECTION

Geoff Greenleaf, *piano*
Joshua Hollingsworth, *bass*
Cale Berkey, *drums*

↪ INTERMISSION ↪

STUDIO JAZZ ENSEMBLE I

Roy Cummings, *director*

CD 13,511

[1] comments

THE FAR EAST SUITE.....DUKE ELLINGTON

[2] I. TOURIST POINT OF VIEW (5:00)..... Carl Staaf, *tenor saxophone*

[3] II. BLUEBIRD OF DELHI (MYNAH) (3:15)..... Carl Staaf, *clarinet*

[4] III. ISFAHAN (4:05).....Dane Andersen, *alto saxophone*

[5] IV. DEPK (2:36)

[6] V. MOUNT HARISSA (7:43).....Michael Cabe, *piano*
Andrew Glynn, *tenor saxophone*

[7] VI. BLUE PEPPER (FAR EAST OF THE BLUES) (3:20)
Scott Ryckman, *alto saxophone*
Cesar Amaral & David White, *trumpet*

[8] VII. AGRA (2:28)..... Kathy Smith, *baritone saxophone*

[9] VIII. AMAD (4:19).....Kelly Clingan, *trombone*

[10] IX. AD LIB ON NIPPON (12:56).....Michael Cabe, *piano*
Michael Glynn, *bass*
Eric Peters, *drums*

[11] Encore - Take the A-Train (4:52)
Andrew Glynn, *clarinet*

SAXOPHONE

Dane Andersen
Scott Ryckman
Andrew Glynn
Carl Staaf
Kathy Smith

TRUMPET

Cesar Amaral
Michael Van Bebber
David White
Nick Roumonada

TROMBONE

Kelly Clingan
Stuart Hambley
Emily Asher
Brad Norton

RHYTHM SECTION

Michael Cabe, *piano*
Michael Glynn, *bass*
Eric Peters, *drums*
Michael McGee, *guitar*

Duke Ellington's *Far East Suite* is considered to be one of the major works of the celebrated composer whose centennial is being observed this year. It was inspired by Ellington's 1963 State Department tour of South Asia, the Middle East, and Persia as musical ambassador for the United States. Although the assassination of John F. Kennedy interrupted their tour, Ellington and his collaborator Billy Strayhorn were able to capture the flavor of the regions they visited in a magnificent nine-part suite. The *Penguin Guide to Jazz* comments on the *Far East Suite*: This remains one of the peaks of post-war Ellington.

Ellington and Strayhorn not only captured the flavors of the regions they visited but also transmuted them into the Ellington sound. They incorporated regional modes, tuning schemes, and the use of drones, though not the rhythms, since these had already been introduced to the U.S. by other jazzmen.

THE ORIGINAL ALBUM NOTES:

When Duke Ellington left New York on September 6, 1963, he began one of the most eventful journeys of his long career. The next evening, he and his orchestra found themselves in Damascus, the first stop on a State Department tour that was to take them to Amman, Kabul, New Delhi, Ceylon, Tehran, Madras, Bombay, Baghdad and Ankara. Also on the itinerary were Istanbul, Nicosia, Cairo, Alexandria, Athens and Thessalonica, but concerts in these cities were indefinitely postponed when the tragic news of President Kennedy's assassination reached them in Ankara.

The tour was a great adventure for us on what is indeed the other side of the world," Duke Ellington wrote in *Musical Journal* ("Orientations," March 1964). "Sometimes I felt it was this world upside down. The look of the natural country is so unlike ours and the very contours of the earth seem to be different. The smell, the vastness, the birds, and the exotic beauty of all these countries make a great inspiration."

More specifically, he detailed lizards, chameleons, camels, cobras, snake charmers, a storm in Bombay, an all-rose sky in Calcutta, the Kandy dancers in Ceylon, and a twenty-piece orchestra in Delhi that used not one instrument familiar to the West.

"I hope much of this will go into music," he continued, "but doing a parallel to the East has its problems. From my perspective, I think I have to be careful not to be influenced too strongly by the music we heard, because there is a great sameness about it, beginning in the Arabic countries and going through India all the way to Ceylon. There are many different kinds of drums, of course, and many strange instruments, and in India and Ceylon they have about ten scales, but the moment you become academic about it you are going to fall into the trap of copying many other people who have tried to give a reflection of the music.

"So far as the rhythms are concerned, I don't think there is anything really new there. Other musicians who had been before us had picked up on all of them. That's another reason why I don't want to copy this rhythm or that scale. It's more valuable to have absorbed while there. You let it roll around, undergo a chemical change, and then seep out on paper in the form that will suit the musicians who are going to play it. But it really takes quite a bit of doing to decide what to do and what not to do, particularly when you have that big, wonderful and beautiful world over there as a subject. You don't want to underestimate or understate it."

The musical impressions that 'seeped out' onto paper from his pen and that of his friend and co-composer Billy Strayhorn were rich and rewarding. Although the impressions were at first concerned with the Near and Middle East, they soon became known to concertgoers under the generic title of *The Far East Suite*. In 1964, moreover, the Ellington band did indeed go to the Far East—to Japan—on a tour which inspired *Ad Lib on Nippon*, the piece which concludes the set. Recorded in December 1966, more than three years after the oriental adventures began, this album is a well-considered collection for the most original material to appear under Duke Ellington's name since *AFRO-BOSSA*.

Tourist Point of View is the East, fresh to the inexperienced eye of the West—exotic, dramatic and strange; a world 'upside down.' While the swift rhythmic patterns of John Lamb's bass and newcomer Rufus Jones' drums provide an undercurrent of mysterious excitement, Paul Gonsalves' sinuous saxophone lines reveal the inspiration of unusual chords. This perhaps parallels Ellington's recognition of the fact that Paul, one of the tour's most successful ambassadors on and off the stand, "makes friends wherever he goes." Some of the color changes here are obtained by Jimmy Hamilton and Russell Procope using clarinets in the reed section, and by Mercer Ellington and Herbie Jones using flugelhorns with the brass.

Bluebird of Delhi, or *Mynah*, Ellington explains "was the bird that sang the pretty lick Jimmy Hamilton plays on clarinet. He sang it all the time Billy Strayhorn was in his room. Then, when he left, the bird sounded the low raspberry you hear at the end of the number." Besides the bird, however, we are given its context in a rich orchestral impression. Incidentally, there is no pianist to be heard on this. He was busy conducting.

Isfahan is for the city that has been called the Pearl of Persia. "It is a place," Ellington recalls, "where everything is poetry. They meet you at the airport with poetry and you and you go away with poetry." The main role in this beautiful, melodic souvenir is accordingly entrusted to the poetic saxophone of Johnny Hodges. *Isfahan*, a Persian poet once wrote, "is half the world."

Inspired by a dance Ellington witnessed in the Near East, *Depk* brings a chance of pace and mood. "It was a wonderful dance by six boys and six girls," he says, "and I tried to get the cats in the band to do it. All I could remember