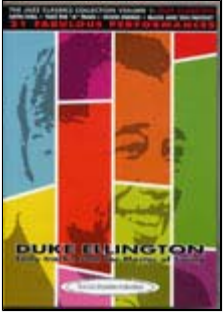




Duke Ellington - Early Tracks from the Master of Swing (2005)

A fine collection of 21 Ellington music videos



Duke Ellington - Early Tracks from the Master of Swing (2005)

The Jazz Classics Collection Vol. 1

Studio: The CD Card Co./Distr. by MVD - JCCDVD 001

Video: 4:3, B&W

Audio: PCM mono

No region code

Extras: 4 additional tracks from the Jazz Classics Collection

Length: 85 minutes

Rating: *****

Some of these Ellington clips from early movies and Soundies will be familiar to many jazz fans; I have several of them on both VHS & Beta tapes as well as DVDs - one of them is also distributed by MVD: Duke Ellington in Hollywood ([We've reviewed it.](#))

The 21 tracks in this Jazz Classics Collection include such expected big hits as Satin Doll, Mood Indigo, Sophisticated Lady and Take the 'A' Train, and an excerpt from each of the short sound films from 1929 which were the first appearances of Ellington on film - Symphony in Black and Black & Tan. (The Ellington in Hollywood DVD has the complete films and in slightly better transfers.) Most of the tunes are filmed in a straightforward manner as if you were at a club or dance hall standing right in front of the band stand. However, others are staged in typical Hollywood style of the period, and Ellington knew well how to play to the camera. Notice how he can be turned about 90 degrees on the piano bench and still be playing swinging riffs on the piano with both hands!

Some of the unfamiliar tracks were new to me, and I have a sizeable LP & CD Ellington collection. There is a tune from Ellington's Shakespeare Suite and another titled Timon of Athens March. Always wondered what Herb Jeffries looked like, and here he is singing Flamingo. It's great to see some of the famous Ellington stars up close doing their thing - Cat Anderson, Cootie Williams, Ben Webster. The mono sound is really not bad at all. The four extra bonus performances are Dizzy Gillespie and his band in One Bass Hit, Les Paul playing Dark Eyes, Peggy Lee singing Why Don't You Do Right?, and Cab Calloway in his inimitable Minnie The Moocher bit. I would think any Ellington fan into the Duke on film would want to have both of these fascinating DVDs in their collection. [And a half dozen of our lucky readers will have this one following the end of our August drawing...Ed.]

Tracks: Satin Doll, Mood Indigo, Fly Me to the Moon, Blow By Blow Ready Go, Flamingo, Thing's Ain't What They Used to Be, Afribosa, C Jam Blues, Tootie for Cootie, Sophisticated Lady, Symphony in Black, Bli Blip, Skiddypoop, Jam with Sam, Cottontail, Black and Tan Fantasy, The Prowling Cat, Alcibiades, I Got It Bad and That Ain't Good, Take the 'A' Train, Vip Boogie/Jam with Sam

-- John Henry

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