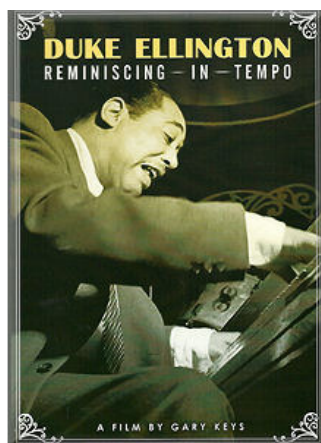


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DVD REVIEW

DUKE ELLINGTON

Reminiscing in Tempo

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In the years after Duke Ellington's death in 1974, his sister Ruth organised an annual party for his birthday, where friends and relatives of the Duke reminisced about his musical genius, his suaveness, his humour and his weakness for the ladies. This DVD, made in 2005 by Gary Keys, celebrates the Duke by using shots of this party plus film of a 1968 concert given by the Ellington Orchestra in Mexico and events at a meeting of the Duke Ellington Society.

The result is rather fragmentary, with observations and recollections from the likes of Bobby Short, Al Hibbler and Billy Taylor. These are particularly interesting in recalling rare Ducal pieces like *The Lonely Coed*. And the concert footage includes large extracts from the little-known *Mexican Suite*, as well as golden moments like Russell Procope's glorious clarinet in *Mood Indigo*, Johnny Hodges' lovely alto in *Prelude to a Kiss*, and baritone saxist Harry Carney holding an unbelievably long note at the end of *Sophisticated Lady*.

Because it is bitty, the DVD may well only appeal to Ellington devotees. The concert footage is sometimes blurred, and the dialogue is not always audible, so subtitles would have been helpful. Duke's famous tenorist Paul Gonsalves is wrongly captioned as Paul Gonsalvez. However, any footage of Ellington's band is valuable, so this DVD is worth treasuring despite its defects.

Tony Augarde

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