

**JUMP FOR JOY:** From the 1941 Production with Duke Ellington and his Orchestra, Ivy Anderson, Herb Jeffries, Joe Turner, Marie Bryant, Paul White and Wonderful Smith. Music by Duke Ellington. Lyrics by Paul Webster and Sid Kuller. Compiled by the Smithsonian Collection of Recordings, Washington DC 20560. R-037 (DMM1-0722); one LP.

This is not just another reissue of vintage Ellington material; it has at least two other dimensions: the social significance of the show itself, and the insight and research which went into producing the record and documenting it so fully. Jump for Joy was conceived in Hollywood in early 1941 by Duke Ellington and a group of his show-biz admirers; it opened in Hollywood on July 10 and closed September 27, 1941, after 101 performances. The first all-black show to present black entertainment from a black viewpoint and not, as Duke Ellington put it, "through Stephen Foster's glasses," it made a large impact on those who saw it and on those who played in it. It could no doubt have effected a much greater national impact had it achieved its ambition of getting onto Broadway.

The material presented on this record is drawn from four sources: commercial recordings, radio transcriptions, soundies and film soundtrack. The accompanying 32 page booklet fully analyses the social significance of the show and follows through each stage of its evolution, its run, and its aftermath, particularly in terms of the career development of several of the artists. There are some fascinating interviews with participants.

The music provides a condensed version of the general running order of the show. Stomp Caprice (from a Standard Transcription P-183) provides a bravura opening and features the Duke at the keyboard. Brown-Skin Gal (in the Calico Gown) is the Victor recording (27517, MX 061339-1) of the tune with which Herb Jeffries serenaded Dorothy Dandridge on stage. There are two versions of Bli-Blip. The first is from one of the two soundies made of the show, and features Marie Bryant and Paul White in a very hip scat vocal encounter, with solos by Ray Nance and Jimmy Blanton. The second is the regular Victor issue (27639, MX 061686-1) which features Nance on trumpet and vocal. Wonderful Smith's monologue, Hello, Mr. President, is a veritable time capsule, and is the slightly-censored version found in the film Top Sergeant Mulligan, made later in 1941. The second soundies soundtrack has Ivy Anderson doing I Got It Bad (And That Ain't Good). Her voice is at its chameleon best and there's some silvery insinuations from Johnny Hodges' alto. Her voice is better recorded on the Victor version (27531, MX 061319-1), which follows immediately, and which offers us a rare glimpse of the Duke playing the celeste.

Bugle Breaks is a vigorous instrumental from a radio transcription featuring Barney Bigard, Ben Webster, Joe Nanton and Rex Stewart. It is followed by another instrumental, Subtle Slough, by a small Ellington group nominally under the leadership

of Rex Stewart, recording for the Bluebird label (B-11258, MX 061343-1). The group is very tight, with the rhythm section a model of smooth propulsion, and Stewart outstanding on open and muted cornet. The first version of *Rocks In My Bed* is from an Ellington Victor session (27639, MX 061685-1) and has an expressive vocal by Ivy Anderson and solos by Hardwicke and Bigard. The second version is sung by Joe Turner, whose blues-drenched voice was added to the show when it had been running for about a month, and who is accompanied on this Decca recording (4093, MX DLA-2838-A-B) by a sympathetic trio led by Freddie Slack.

The first version of the tune *Jump for Joy* was recorded by the Ellington Band in the Victor studios (27517, MX 061340-1) just eight days before the show opened. It's a swinger with fine solos by Nanton and Hodges and with Carney adding his strength to the ensembles. The lyrics, sung here by Herb Jeffries, set the tone of the show in their rejection of previous presentations of black reality. Conversely, the lyrics of *Chocolate Shake*, which follows, seem to owe much to that previous era. The good news is that they are sung by Ivy Anderson and that there are solos by Harry Carney and Ray Nance on this Victor recording (27531, MX 061318-1). The first act ended with the big production number, *Uncle Tom's Cabin In A Drive-In Now*, and *Giddybug Gallop* is believed to have been a part of it. This polyrhythmic piece, originally issued on Victor (27502, MX 061286-1), has solos by Nanton, Hodges and Bigard. The album ends with a second version of *Jump for Joy*, recorded at the same session as the previous version, but with Ivy Anderson handling the vocal duties (RCA LPV-517, MX 061340-2). This seems to me to be a better recorded version, and Ivy's vocal is enhanced by inspired solos from Nanton and Hodges.

The musical selection for this issue was made by Martin Williams and the notes are by Patricia Willard; mastering engineer was Jack Towers. Preparation and production of an album like this are obviously a labor of love and become doubly valuable when carried out with such care and scholarship.

-Ron Sweetman-