

vienna art
orchestra

duke
Ellington On
Charles &
Mingus

the original charts of duke ellington & charles mingus

the program the original charts

Hobo Ho

Composed originally by Mingus under a Guggenheim grant he had just received. Mingus dictated the arrangement to Bobby Jones, who wrote the score. Mingus' band never managed to master this piece, due to its complicated repeats. The various parts were later melded artificially in the studio. The VAO is playing Hobo Ho in slightly altered and adapted form. This version by m. rüegg, is based in part on the original notes, that were never performed, and partially on the recorded rendition.

The Shoes of the Fisherman's Wife Are Some Five Abs Slippers

This Mingus composition for octet premièred under unhappy circumstances at the 1965 Monterey Jazz Festival. Its title, "Once Upon a Time There Was a Holding Corporation Called Old America", was later scrapped by Mingus because he thought he was being followed by the FBI. This version was transcribed from the record "Music Written for Monterey 1965: Not heard...Played in its Entirety at UCLA" and orchestrated by Sy Johnson, who jumped in for Thad Jones.

The I of Hurricane Sue

Composed by Mingus and dedicated to Sue Mingus. Scored by Mingus especially for this recording session, for small jazz orchestra with ten-piece traditional orchestral accompaniment. Large band arrangement by Sy Johnson.

Don't Be Afraid, the Clown's Afraid Too?

The Mingus' octet version transcribed and arranged by Sy Johnson from "Music Written for Monterey..." The trumpet intro is a dedication to the widow of trumpeter Hobart Dotsen, who played the original version. The interlude in three-four time, reminiscent of Weil, is borrowed from an earlier composition, "The Clown"

the musicians

Corin Curschellas	voice	(CH)
Thorsten Benkenstein	trumpet	(BRD)
Matthieu Michel	trumpet	(CH)
Bumi Fian	trumpet	(A)
Herbert Joos	flugelhorn	(BRD)
Harry Sokal	reeds	(A)
Klaus Dickbauer	reeds	(A)
Florian Bramböck	reeds	(A)
Andy Scherrer	reeds	(CH)
Herwig Gradischnig	reeds	(A)
Claudio Pontiggia	frenchhorn	(CH)
Christian Radovan	trombone	(A)
Danilo Terenzi	trombone	(I)
Charly Wagner	basstrombone	(A)
Frank Tortiller	vibes	(F)
Uli Scherer	piano	(A)
Heiri Känzig	bass	(CH)
Thomas Alkier	drums	(BRD)
mathias rüegg	leader	

translation: Karin Kaminker **artdirection:** Leroy at O/R/E/L

photos: Wolfgang Großebner, Sascha Sengmüller

All titles recorded live (48 digital track) at the "Five Spot" New York City (October 23, 1993) by Jürg Peterhans. Remixed at Studio Powerplay by Jürg Peterhans, mathias rüegg & Ronald Matky (December 13 -15, 1993) Uli Scherer plays Bösendorfer with Schertler pick-ups. Harry Sokal plays Selmer saxes & Vandoren reeds. Thanks to EV & AKG. Thanks to the City of Vienna, the BM f.A.A., the BM f.U.K. and to Pro Helvetia. Thanks to Estate of Herbert von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra for using "Anitra's Dance" from the Deutsche Grammophon record Edvard Grieg "Peer Gynt Suites".

In Ellington's most-trusted entourage were Paul Gonsalves, Sonny Greer, Harry Carney, Sam Woodyard, Johnny Hodges, Barney Bigard, Ray Nance, Jimmy Hamilton, Cat Anderson, and Cootie Williams,

among others. Dannie Richmond, Jaki Byard, Jimmy Knepper, Ted Curson, John Handy, Bobby Jones, Don Pullen, and George Adams count among those who stuck by Mingus over the years.

Next to the Gospel, the European Modern and the melodic lines of Charlie Parker, the bassist Mingus (1922-1979) turned to Ellington's orchestral coloring for prime inspiration. He tended to view the Duke (1899-1974) as some kind of OVERLORD (in this, he was not alone. As **MILES DAVIS** said about Ellington on the occasion of his 75th birthday, "Some day all musicians should gather to bow down and say "thank you".*") until 1953, when he joined Ellington's band for a short guest performance as a bass player.

Later, in 1962, Mingus recorded a famous trio album together with Coltrane and Ellington. Nevertheless, when the Duke, at his

70th birthday celebration, asked Mingus to conduct *The Clown*, (parts of which Mingus later used in the piece "Don't Be Afraid, The Clown's Afraid, Too), Mingus didn't respond and hid from view. No one could find him. Perhaps, somewhere in the dark, he was composing his "Open Letter to Duke"?

Mingus **suffered** because he felt that his pioneering work wasn't well enough understood and appreciated. He once had a chance to become better known when he was nominated for a Grammy, but he passed it up because the award wasn't for his accomplishments as a musician...it was for his skill at writing liner notes! **Ellington**, on the other hand, was not interested in having his music played by others because he thought it might lead to financial losses. Maybe he was not even fully aware of the worth of his work and band. In any case, he was happy when his charts were copied badly, making other bands that played from them sound worse than his. This may be one reason why many bands have steered clear of Ellington's scores. Mingus' charts are often considered too difficult and complex. For these and the above reasons, it seems nearly impossible for most other bands to realize their music. To make matters worse, anyone can look back at the original recordings, that got their validity through the specific sound of

Just as Mingus and Ellington worked together with their musicians over a long period of time to create a special sound, our orchestra can look back at a long past which, since 1977, has had its own continuity. I felt this has put us in a position—after developing so many of our own programs—to tackle the challenge of playing the music of these great masters.

This time I've chosen not to simply adapt their pieces but to try to make new versions by going back to the original scores. When the idea first came to me, I didn't worry about whether the original charts were still around ...

I've been familiar with the music of Mingus since I was young. One record in particular, "Let My Children Hear Music", knocked me out when I heard it for the first time 12 years ago. I heard Ellington play live in one of his last concerts (Graz, 1974) when I was still a young and stressed-out jazz student, but I didn't know any more about him than most normal jazz fans would know. Only after intensive study, did I discover the many parallels between the Duke and Mingus, and it became clear to me why I had chosen Ellington. Basically, the music of both composers is deeply anarchic. It's intensive, wild—not smooth. It's powerful, creative.

Mingus had a character that most people found difficult, so much so that Sy Johnson once said that a single one of Mingus' neuroses was more interesting than the whole biography of many others. Ellington, on the other hand, started out at a time when jazz was already taken over by the entertainment industry and he knew how to play the show business game. But even though, in his business and private lives, he managed to conform better to social norms, when it came to his band and music, he stretched the limits; he was the embodiment of creativity, just like Mingus.

Another **parallel** can be seen in the way they combined their own African-American cultural roots with European traditionalism/modernism. Ellington looked up to Bach ("Bach said, if you don't have a good left hand, you're good for nothing."*). He did adaptations of Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Suite" and Grieg's "Peer Gynt Suite", and also produced musical portrayals of characters from Shakespeare's dramas ("Such Sweet Thunder"). Mingus was fascinated by Ravel and Debussy. "As a youth I read a book by Debussy," Mingus recalled, "and he said that as soon as he finished a composition he had to forget it because it got in the way of his doing anything else new and different...I believed him."*

Mingus learned yet another side of European culture in a prematurely-ended course of psychoanalysis.

Für HELMUT ZICK,
 weil er alles Lieder sagen
 wir sehr, sehr viel getan hat,
 daß aus einer Pensionisten-
 Stadt eine kulturelle Welt-
 Stadt geworden ist.
 Herzlichst, ein
 und auch ein
 wenig dankbar
 Mathias Risch
 Wien
 09.09.98



Ellington's **greatest** moments occur in the nearly 1,000 songs which he colored distinctively with his own highly individual orchestrations. He wrote suites possibly out of a desire to be treated like a classical composer but they tended to suffer from his lack of time and patience and were sometimes over-ambitious and too academic in feeling. "There's nothing better," he once said, "than to plan in the night and to hear the results the next day. I'm pretty impatient, you know."*

Mingus, **on the contrary**, expanded on formal structures and, although he showed incredible strengths as a melodist, distanced himself from the song form. He created new idioms with

complex tempo
 and **rhythm changes**

and collective improvisations (often several soloists played simultaneously) kept in balance with the written tune.

Balance was the key; Mingus didn't like it when his musicians went overboard. "I have found very little value left after the average guy takes his first eight bars—not to mention two or

three choruses," he once said. "Because then it just becomes repetition, riffs and patterns, instead of spontaneous creativity. I could never get Bird to play over two choruses. Now kids play fifty thousand if you let them.

Who is that good?"

Ellington **never** sounded as modern as Mingus because he didn't care as much about the new developments in jazz (i.e. Be Bop, Cool Jazz and Free Jazz). He **concentrated** instead on cultivating his own style. Ellington could be viewed as an avant-garde traditionalist and Mingus as a tradition-bound avant-gardist.

Mingus and Ellington were both spontaneous composers who preferred to leave the transcription of notes to others (Mingus: "If you like Beethoven, Bach or Brahms, that's okay. They were all pencil composers.") Ellington had a "ghost writer," Billy Strayhorn, who snatched the Duke's compositions—as they were born, in an airplane, in a restaurant or right after a concert—arranged them, orchestrated them and presented them to the band already the next day. Mingus sang the themes for his musicians, who had to commit them to memory on the spot.

For the improvisation of many riffs and

countermelodies, the musicians were naturally inspired by the expressive **power** of the dominant themes.

Ellington's musicians often had to more or less guess what he wanted from them. In his scores, there were the infamous

gaps

that particularly made newcomers to the band sweat. But the ingenious intentions of both the composer and his musicians could only be realized through such collaboration. Out of this rapport developed

the Instrumental jazz composer arranger

(arch)type; the band leaders and the style-setting improvisers who managed to strike an ideal balance between spontaneity and complexity, individuality and collectivity, improvisation and composition, and who knew, moreover, how to coax the subconscious, the "not yet played," out of their musicians (Miles Davis was also masterful at this).

Both Ellington and Mingus lived and played in a time when scores were being replaced by the record. It is perhaps **no coincidence** that jazz developed parallel to the development of the record industry, through which it was eventually able to conquer the music world. In spite of, or perhaps because of the sometimes incomplete (in the case of Ellington) or dilettante (Mingus) scores, jazz and music history received a unique twist.

But the public wasn't much interested in following the complex developments and innovations that were occurring in jazz. The Ellington band, which during the 1950s had nearly slipped into obscurity and had to fight for its survival, staged a comeback in 1956 at the Newport Festival. For the public, the magic moment came when Paul Gonsalves blew 27 choruses on "Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue"....

Over the decades, both band leaders cultivated **intensive** musical and personal **relationships**...relationships that were often problematic, resulting in

love/hate.

Ellington avoided **O P E N** conflicts; Mingus, on the other hand, didn't shy away from his "enemies" and on occasion even attacked them physically.

Heinz Czadek painstakingly transcribed Ellington's. "Come Sunday", "Anitra's Dance" and "El Gato" from the records and advised me on this project. The other transcriptions come from Dave Berger, a true specialist who has transcribed around 300 of Ellington's tunes.

The score for "Let My Children Hear Music" (recorded in studio in 1971; produced by Teo Macero) is partially the original, partially a new arrangement by Sy Johnson. As far as I know, this program has **never** been performed live. We had to drop the two compositions arranged by Alan Ralph because we lacked the necessary personnel.

The Shoes of the Fisherman's Wife was transcribed and orchestrated by Sy Jonson from the record "Music Written for Monterey," at Mingus' request, because the notes had been lost. Later, Sy Johnson wrote a big band version. In the case of "Anitra's Dance", we're playing Ellington's version of the piece by Grieg, arranged by Strayhorn and transcribed by Dave Berger.

That sounds more post-modern than it really is.

mathias ruegg, **june1993**

1. Hobo Ho
Solos by H. Joos, D. Terenzi & B. Fian
2. Interlude
Solos by C. Pontiggia & U. Scherer
3. The Shoes Of The Fisherman's Wife Are Some Jive Ass Slippers
Solos by B. Fian, A. Scherrer & M. Michel, C. Radovan, H. Gradischnig & F. Bramböck
4. Interlude
Solo by H. Känzig
5. The I Of Hurricane Sue
Solos by C. Radovan, A. Scherrer & C. Pontiggia
6. Don't Be Afraid, The Clown's Afraid Too?
Solos by H. Sokal, H. Gradischnig, U. Scherer & H. Joos
7. Interlude
Solo by F. Bramböck
8. Red Shoes
Solos by C. Pontiggia, C. Radovan, H. Sokal & M. Michel
9. Madness In Great Ones
Solo by F. Tortiller
10. Anitra's Dance
Solo by F. Bramböck
11. Anitra's Dance (o.v.)
Solo by A. Scherrer
12. Asphalt Jungle
Solo by B. Fian
13. Come Sunday
Solos by C. Curschellas & K. Dickbauer
14. El Gato
Solos by K. Dickbauer & H. Sokal

Red Shoes

Composed and arranged by Duke Ellington.

The second passage from the Jazz Festival Suite, otherwise known as Toot Suite, from the album "Jazz at the Piazza, Vol.II" (1973/Sony Music), recorded live in 1958. Jimmy Rushing and even Billie Holliday join in towards the end of the concert.

Madness in Great Ones

Composed and arranged by Duke Ellington.

This piece comes from the program "Such Sweet Thunder" (recorded 1956-57; Sony Music), written for the Shakespeare Festival, Stratford, Ontario. Here, Ellington tried to portray Hamlet; how he betrayed his stepfather and convinced him he was crazy.

Anitra's Dance

Composed by Edvard Grieg (1843-1907); arranged by Billy Strayhorn (1960).

Drawn from the album Three Suites (Columbia), this began as an adaptation of the "Nutcracker" and "Peer Gynt" suites that Grieg wrote in 1888 as stage music for Ibsen's drama "Peer Gynt" (the helpless wanderings of the Nordic Faust). Spiced with turn-of-the-century exotic flavor, this popular piece, which has features that anticipate numerous jazz elements, must have spurred Ellington and Strayhorn to rise to high form.

Asphalt Jungle

Composed and arranged by Duke Ellington.

From the album "In the Uncommon Market". (Pablo) Recorded live in 1963 during a Europe-tour. Features virtuoso performances by the saxophone section.

Come Sunday

Composed and arranged by Duke Ellington.

In 1958, Mahalia Jackson gave in to long-standing pressure from Ellington to appear with his jazz band. Since there was no text for the piece Come Sunday, the "deeply"-religious Ellington took Mahalia's Bible and opened it impulsively to the 23rd Psalm. "Come Sunday" is part of the suite "Black, Brown and Beige", a musical statement on the race issue, which Ellington rarely addressed verbally.

El Gato

Composed by Cat Anderson; arranged by Duke Ellington.

Comes also from the album "Jazz at the Piazza, Vol.II." Since, at the Piazza concert, Ellington's band followed directly on the heels of the Miles Davis Sextet, they began intentionally with Cat Anderson's fulminating composition that requires top performance by the trumpet section.

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vienna art orchestra

the original charts



1. **Hobo Ho** by Charles Mingus, Jazz Workshop Inc.* + available on the first 5.000 CDs ONLY 9:01
2. **Interlude** by Claudio Pontiggia & Uli Scherer, Antenna 1:20
3. **The Shoes Of The Fisherman's Wife**
Are Some Jive Ass Slippers by Charles Mingus, Jazz Workshop Inc.* 8:22
4. **Interlude** by Heiri Känzig, Antenna 1:38
5. **The I Of Hurricane Sue** by Charles Mingus, Jazz Workshop Inc.* 6:02
6. **Don't Be Afraid, The Clown's Afraid Too?**
by Charles Mingus, Jazz Workshop Inc.* 10:56
7. **Interlude** by Duke Ellington & Florian Bramböck, Antenna 1:44
8. **Red Shoes** by Duke Ellington/Billy Strayhorn, Tempo Mus. Inc. 4:09
9. **Madness In Great Ones** by Duke Ellington/Billy Strayhorn, United Artists Mus. Ltd 5:09
10. **Anitra's Dance**
by Edvard Grieg, arranged by Billy Strayhorn/Duke Ellington, Tempo Mus. Inc. 3:01
11. **Anitra's Dance (original version)**** by Edvard Grieg available on the first 5.000 CDs ONLY 3:35
12. **Asphalt Jungle** by Duke Ellington, CBS Robbins Catalogue Inc. 4:50
13. **Come Sunday** by Duke Ellington, Tempo Mus. Inc. 6:37
14. **El Gato** by Cat Anderson, Tempo Mus. Inc. 3:29

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** Taken from the Deutsche Grammophon recording Edvard Grieg "Peer Gynt Suites I & II" by Herbert von Karajan/Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra • DG 410 026-2

+ Taken from the Sony Music recording Charles Mingus
"...presents Charles Mingus feat. Eric Dolphy" • Sony 564358

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