

# AFRO-BOSSA

## DUKE ELLINGTON and his orchestra

### AFRO-BOSSA

*Afro-Bossa* is the first album produced by the Ellington Jazz Wing of Reprise. It is also an album for which Duke Ellington can be directly responsible (unlike his previous recordings), as he acted as arranger and conductor, he added here three of a and a man as well. His new supervisor, and given *cette fantasia* to record what he wished, he aspired to new heights.

*Afro-Bossa* reflects an awareness of what he humorously terms "new *novelties* *ragae* *novelties*" Via rhythms and percussion, a basically African impulse has been given to that complex microcosm which is the Ellington musical world. Latin-American, in its own right, is a tag (loosely) applied to music that might often more justly be described as Afro-American, so it is that, so it is African, Spanish and Formosan characteristics. There is a north of Africa, and a south of Africa, and an affair between jazz and the samba, parallels what has happened around the Mediterranean for centuries. There, where Africa, Asia and Europe meet, the traffic in music and ideas has obviously been intense and continuous. The Carthaginians, for example, took Africa into Europe; and besides science and medicine, the Moors certainly introduced their music into Spain. The ancient historian, Pliny, once reported what was commonly said among the Greeks when he wrote, "Out of Africa always something new."

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*Afro-Bossa*, the opening number, is familiarly known to Duke and his men as "the gashooter bolero." From its mysterious beginning, where the op-pressed trumpets enter one by one, it builds to a climax of tremendous power. As the drums fade into the distance at the end, they may evoke the feeling that Hannibal, perhaps, is over the Alps, elephants and all. The major solo statement is lavishly made by Ray Nance on cornet. Johnny Hodges, Paul Gonsalves and Jimmy Hamilton are the other soloists heard.

Paul Gonsalves, also as referred by its composer as "the ragtime cha-cha," makes a sprightly solo which exhibits all his old authority. Ray Nance (open horns) and Paul Gonsalves are also featured.

Abimbo is by Billy Strayhorn, who plays piano here while Duke conducts, reflecting the eternally green liquor's mysterious warmth. Paul Gonsalves, Harry Catery, Ray Nance and Jimmy Hamilton are the soloists, and the rhythm section

is supplemented by Roy Brown with cowbell and Cat Anderson with two delectably wilded berles. *Abimbo* is an exciting impression of a rare natural phenomenon—the night's equivalent of the day, which Duke would have seen in 1962. The three featured soloists—Ray Nance, Roy Brown and Cat Anderson—surround the soloist of Jimmy Hodges and Paul Gonsalves with an atmosphere of eerie enchantment.

Sempre Amore, a showcase for Ray Nance's mellow violin, has a recurring and particularly haunting motif for the supporting ensemble. Here it is a new thing, the Ellington *bolero* in a performance surely destined for a long and popular life. Besides the assistance of Mezz, Anderson and Browners as a long and popular life, the performance is further reinforced by Billy Strayhorn and Coote Williams. Sam Woodard heightens the rhythmic effect by beating the snare drum with mazzuca.

The instrumental *Empire Town Blues* is played by Jimmy Hamilton.

The instrumental *Empire Town Blues* is played by Jimmy Hamilton. The exterior of many a woman there licks a consuming animal, a veritable tiger. Paul Gonsalves displays the moldering theme on tenor, Jimmy Hamilton and Coote Williams reprove ensemble formalism, and the percussionists have themselves another ball.

Angu is a plaintive number. "It's not quite a tango, but almost blue," says Duke helpfully. The minimalist Hodges also takes care of the melody, which Ray Nance also follows, and Billy Strayhorn, on an old mandolin-piano, dances with the melody on the strings.

Volupte, in Duke's words, seeks to portray "the essence of voluptuousness." Himself the chief arranger, the conception expressed at the keyboard is highly individual, spare and wiled.

Bossa, subtitled "Empire Town Blues," paints a weird and mysterious picture of a deserted border-town. The assertive brass trio with plunger mutes consists of Nance, Williams and Brown. Jimmy Hamilton and Buster Cooper's are the ghost voices, edging fortitously in the arena.

Williams and a poor Duke's first venture up the Nile. Lawrence Brown and Coote Williams, the finale, flourish. Cat Anderson's trumpet virtuosity in a wild dance before an elaborate orchestral backdrop.

Out of Ellington always something new!

— STANLEY DANCE

The compositions are:

AFRO-BOSSA TIGRESS  
PURPLE GAZELLE ANGU  
ABIMBO VOLUPTÉ  
MOONBOW BONGA  
SEMPE AMORE PYRAMID  
SILK LACE EIGHTH VEIL

PERSONNEL:

Duke Ellington, piano; Cat Anderson, Ray Brown, Coote Williams, saxophone; Ray Nance, cornet and violin; Lawrence Brown, Buster Cooper, trombone; Chuck Connors, bass; Harry Catery, Bill Strayhorn, alto saxophone and clarinet; Johnny Hodges, alto saxophone; Jimmy Hamilton, cello and tenor saxophone; Paul Gonsalves, tenor saxophone; Harry Catery, piano; Sam Woodard, drums; Coote Williams, mazzuca; Lawrence Brown and Coote Williams, auxiliary percussionists.

\*Ellington courtesy of Verve Records.