

Oscar Peterson – Plays The Duke Ellington Song Book (1999)

Written by bluesever

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01. *John Hardy's Wife* [1952] 02. *Sophisticated Lady* [1952] 03. *Things Ain't What They Used to Be* [1952] 04. *Just A-sittin' and A-rockin'* [1952] 05. *In a Mellow Tone* [1952] 06. *I Got It Bad (and That Ain't Good)* [1952] 07. *Prelude to a Kiss* [1952] 08. *Cotton Tail* [1952] 09. *Don't Get Around Much Anymore* [1952] 10. *Take the A Train* [1952] 11. *Rockin' in Rhythm* [1952] 12. *Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me* [1952] 13. *Don't Get Around Much Anymore* [1959] 14. *Sophisticated Lady* [1959] 15. *Rockin' in Rhythm* [1959] 16. *Prelude to a Kiss* [1959] 17. *In a Mellow Tone* [1959] 18. *Cotton Tail* [1959] 19. *Just A-sittin' and A-rockin'* [1959] 20. *Things Ain't What They Used to Be* [1959] 21. *Take the A Train* [1959] 22. *I Got It Bad (and That Ain't Good)* [1959] 23. *Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me* [1959] 24. *John Hardy's Wife* [1959] Ray Brown - Bass Oscar Peterson - Piano Ed Thigpen - Drums

Twice in the 1950s, pianist Oscar Peterson recorded an extensive series of songbooks devoted to one composer. From 1952-53, Peterson, guitarist Barney Kessel and bassist Ray Brown were extensively documented; in 1959, the pianist joined up with Brown and drummer Ed Thigpen to repeat many of the programs (since the group had changed and the music could now be cut in stereo) plus additional songbooks. This 1999 CD brings together both of Peterson's Duke Ellington tributes; the same dozen songs were recorded with each of the two groups. The Duke Ellington-associated material -- which includes two songs by Mercer Ellington and Billy Strayhorn's "Take the 'A' Train" -- mostly consist of familiar songs, except for Mercer Ellington's "John Hardy's Wife." While the earlier session has a fair amount of variety in tempo and mood, with Kessel offering a competing and complementary solo voice to the pianist, the 1959 album was obviously put together very quickly during a two-month period when Peterson was being recorded constantly. Most of the latter songs are taken at slower and more relaxed tempos that make the playing close to easy listening background music. A comparison of the different versions of most of the songs shows the difference. However, due to the generosity of this reissue (24 concise selections that almost total 73-minutes) and the former rarity of the material (especially the Kessel date), Peterson fans will want to acquire this. ---Scott Yanow, Rovi

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