

DUKE ELLINGTON

PIANO IN THE BACKGROUND (Columbia CS 8346) Manufactured by www.speakerscornerrecords.com Vinyl. Duke Ellington (p); Ray Nance, Willie Cook (t); Johnny Hodges (as); Harry Carney (bar, cl) others. 1960.**** Ellington took a selection comprising ten well known and loved compositions and re-visited them with this studio session, concentrating on swinging and straight ahead blowing. Most of the orchestra members get solos and there are strong versions of *Rockin'In Rhythm*, *It Don't Mean A Thing* and *Perdido*. Nance and Cook on trumpets, Hamilton, clarinet and Paul Gonsalves on tenor make this a relatively short but telling reading of *Perdido*. Duke's piano introduces each piece on piano and he takes a solo in the middle of most selections so it is more a case of piano in the foreground really. *Take The A Train* ends the record in a rare full length version. The early stereo is well balanced and enhanced with well mastered 180 gram vinyl. This would make a good all round Ellington disc for a newcomer to his music. (Derek Ansell)