

= Money Jungle =

Money Jungle is a studio album by pianist Duke Ellington with double bassist Charles Mingus and drummer Max Roach . It was recorded on September 17 , 1962 , and released in February 1963 by United Artists Jazz . All but one of the compositions were written by Ellington , with four of the seven on the original LP being recorded for the first time on this album . Later releases on CD added eight tracks from the same recording session .

The album was reviewed positively at the time of its release and subsequent reviews have remained highly favorable . Negative comments have concentrated on differences in playing style among the three musicians , brought about by the generational gap between Ellington and the others , and an argument that led to Mingus leaving the studio mid @-@ session . Hundreds of musicians have been influenced by the recording , in particular by the freedom of individual expression within a small @-@ group setting .

= = Background = =

Producer Alan Douglas had helped Duke Ellington with errands when they were both working in Paris in the early 1960s . Later , after Douglas had joined United Artists and moved to New York , he received , according to his own account , a surprise visit from Ellington , who suggested recording a piano @-@ based album (Ellington was known as a big band leader) . Douglas suggested Charles Mingus as double bassist , who then insisted on having Max Roach as drummer . Mingus had played with Ellington before , deputising for the regular bassist in the leader 's orchestra in 1953 , but was fired after four days , following a fight with another musician , Juan Tizol .

At the time of the 1962 recording , Ellington was 63 years old , while Mingus was 40 and Roach 38 . The generational difference was strengthened by Ellington being a guiding figure for the other two , who were born when Ellington was becoming an influence on music . In 1962 , Ellington did not have a recording contract , while Mingus was signed to United Artists and had not recorded a trio album since 1957 . According to Roach , the three musicians met the day before the recording , and Ellington told them to " Think of me as the poor man 's Bud Powell " and that he would not like to play only his own material .

= = Recording and music = =

The recording was made on Monday , September 17 , 1962 , at Sound Makers Studios in New York City , on 57th Street , between Sixth Avenue and Seventh . The session was due to begin at 1 pm . Roach arrived at midday to set up his drums and found that Ellington was already there , writing out some material . Despite his suggestion the previous day , all of the compositions used were brought by Ellington . For each piece , according to Roach , he and Mingus were given " a lead sheet that just gave the basic melody and harmony " , plus a visual image described by the pianist : one example was , " crawling around on the streets are serpents who have their heads up ; these are agents and people who have exploited artists . Play that along with the music " . The musicians had declined the chance to rehearse , so the recording , which was made on three @-@ track tape , was of their first experience playing together .

Money Jungle is a post @-@ bop album . The original LP contained seven tracks ? six composed by Ellington , and one , " Caravan " by Juan Tizol , strongly associated with him . The title track is a 12 @-@ bar blues that opens with strongly played notes from Mingus , then Ellington joins in with dissonant chords ; Roach supports using ride cymbal , snare and bass drum . In the final minute , Down Beat magazine observed , Mingus bends the " strings with such force that he makes the instrument sound like a cross between a berimbau and a Delta blues guitar " . " Fleurette Africaine " is a ballad developed from a simple melody stated on the piano , and features " Mingus ' floating bassline and Roach 's understated drumming " . " Very Special " is another 12 @-@ bar blues , possibly improvised . These three compositions , plus " Wig Wise " , with its " angular , descending line " , were written specifically for this album . On " Caravan " , Ellington plays the melody in low

octaves , adding " Webern @-@ like notes on the top " , imitating an orchestral sound . " Warm Valley " and " Solitude " are ballads , the latter being a piano solo piece until Mingus and Roach enter in the final minute .

The CD releases feature four more compositions : " Switch Blade " , " Backward Country Boy Blues " , " REM Blues " , and " A Little Max (Parfait) " . The last of these is a Latin @-@ influenced track that features Roach . " Switch Blade " is " a slow blues that showcases Mingus ' virtuosity with a looseness that puts feeling before precision . [... He] intersperses his basslines with countermelodies and answers to what Duke plays . " According to drummer Terri Lyne Carrington , " Backward Country Boy Blues " was probably given its title because part of the usual blues construction is reversed ? the V chord precedes the IV chord .

There have been persistent rumors of clashes among the musicians during the session . Douglas ' version is that Mingus complained about Roach 's playing , then left the studio mid @-@ session , taking his bass with him . Ellington caught up with Mingus on the street outside and persuaded him to return . Ellington 's account was slightly different ? the reason for Mingus leaving was the same , but he was persuaded to return at the elevator . Another version is that Mingus was upset because Ellington did not use any of Mingus ' compositions for the recording . Duke 's son , Mercer Ellington , stated that the trio had a contract with United Artists for two albums , but they could not be persuaded to record together again . Critic Thomas Cuniffe suggests that , listening to the tracks in the order in which they were recorded , " one can easily hear the tension building during the uptempo numbers " , and that Mingus ' temporary departure probably occurred after playing " Money Jungle " , which " represents the apex of the group 's inner tension , with Mingus plucking the strings with his fingernails , Roach firing up the music with polyrhythms and Ellington laying down highly dissonant chords " .

= = Release history = =

The original LP was released by United Artists Jazz in 1963 in mono and stereo versions . United Artists was bought by EMI in 1979 , and subsidiary Blue Note Records reissued the album on CD in 1987 . This contained more recordings from the same session : four previously unreleased works written for the session , plus two alternative takes . The order presented in this edition was that in which the songs were recorded . The sound quality of the original recording was improved for the 2002 Blue Note CD release by engineer Ron McMaster , using the original tapes and 24 @-@ bit remastering , adding clarity to the drums in particular . For this release , the first seven songs were arranged in their original order , with the other four songs and four alternative takes placed afterward , increasing the number of tracks to 15 .

= = Reception and influence = =

= = = Critics = = =

Contemporaneous reviews were favorable . The album was awarded the Grand Prix of the Jazz Magazine of France . In a five @-@ star review , Down Beat magazine 's Don DeMicheal called Money Jungle " astonishing " and described Roach and Mingus as " some of the fastest company around . " He repeatedly praised Mingus for pushing Ellington into new musical territory : " I 've never heard Ellington play as he does on this album ; Mingus and Roach , especially Mingus , push him so strongly that one can almost hear Ellington show them who 's boss ? and he dominates both of them , which is no mean accomplishment . " Billboard was also positive , describing it as " memorable " for its content as well as " the historical importance of the three playing together " .

Much later reviews have been largely positive . Ken Dryden of Allmusic called it a " sensational recording session " and recommended it to " every jazz fan " . The Penguin Guide to Jazz claimed that Mingus " completely steals the show " , but suggested that the " long @-@ standing Ellington staples " " Caravan " and " Warm Valley " are relatively weak renditions , and that Mingus either did

not know the changes or was disgruntled on the latter track . The Financial Times in 2013 described it as " an angular piano @-@ trio masterpiece that [...] confirmed Ellington 's inherent modernism " . Jay Trachtenberg of The Austin Chronicle praised Ellington 's playing and " the modernity of his ideas " , and said that the album " stands , more than ever , as a masterful meeting of jazz royalty . " Writing of the record 's 1986 " remixed and reprogrammed " reissue , Village Voice critic Robert Christgau said " the angular chromaticism and modernist swing of this session relegate most piano @-@ trio records back to the supper clubs . "

The sound quality of the original recording has been described as " disappointingly woolly " , with " incidents of peaky distortion from the piano microphone " . The stereo recording has the piano " up front and center " , with the double bass " far to the right channel " and the drums " Strictly in the left channel and slightly behind the piano " .

= = = Musicians = = =

Hundreds of musicians have been inspired by the album . Pianist Lafayette Gilchrist states that Money Jungle was the first jazz album that he bought , and that it " sounds like an orchestra being played by a trio . I was inspired to make something [...] big and grandiose just like that " . Drummer Jeff " Tain " Watts observed that the members of the trio were " doing their thing , but they ? re together " , and compares this with later groups led by Keith Jarrett and Wayne Shorter , stating that the later groups " have a much freer way of doing it , but everybody 's kind of in their own zone and yet they ? re definitely playing the composition in tune with each other , just like Duke and Max and Mingus were doing on Money Jungle . " Trumpeter Miles Davis had a different view of the session : in a 1964 Down Beat blind listening test , he criticised the record company for putting the three musicians together , saying that " Max and Mingus can play together , by themselves . Mingus is a hell of a bass player , and Max is a hell of a drummer . But Duke can 't play with them , and they can 't play with Duke . "

Pianists have been impressed by Ellington 's playing . Fred Hersch believes that it is one of Ellington 's best recordings on piano , as he was forced by the other musicians to improvise in ways beyond what he would normally have played . Matthew Shipp commented on the free elements in the playing , describing the album as " one of the greatest examples of piano playing I 've ever heard " . John Medeski remarked on the forceful , contrapuntal interaction , facilitated by space .

In 1999 , the band Rhythm and Brass included Money Jungle tracks on their album More Money Jungle ... Ellington Explorations . Drummer Terri Lyne Carrington led the 2013 release Money Jungle : Provocative in Blue , which includes cover versions of tracks from the original album . Of the compositions premiered on the album , " Fleurette Africaine " and " Wig Wise " are commonly recorded by others .

= = Track listing = =

All songs composed by Duke Ellington , except where stated .

= = = LP (1963 ? UAJ) = = =

= = = LP reissue (1986 ? Blue Note) = = =

= = = CD (1987 ? Blue Note) = = =

Composers are as above .

= = = CD (2002 ? Blue Note) = = =

Composers are as above .

= = Personnel = =

= = = Musicians = = =

Duke Ellington ? piano

Charles Mingus ? double bass

Max Roach ? drums

= = = Production = = =