

## DUKE ELLINGTON

Ellington recorded 'Three Little Words' in Hollywood for RCA Victor, first with a vocal by Jimmy Miller and again with Emmanuel Hall's Quintet, on 20 August 1930, but the results were rejected. Just under a week later, on 26 August, came the version with the Rhythm Boys (Bing Crosby, Al Rinker and Harry Barris), released three months later. For the film *Check and Double Check*, the song had a brief run through during the ballroom sequence, and although the on-screen visuals show the trumpet section singing the lyrics through megaphones, it was the Rhythm Boys who provided the vocals for the film soundtrack.

SONNY GREER: We stayed in California making pictures about three months, Man, we had a whole dressing room, place – a stage, where we rehearse for the picture. Them actors got a break where we were playing. They would come over and say, 'Sonny, play – Duke, play your original compositions.' We would. We would have a jam session every time we got a break, the place was full of guests and visitors, and they stayed so long and the man had to come there and say, 'Stop playing so them actors can get back over here on the set and do their thing.'<sup>56</sup>

JUAN TIZOL: They make me and Barney [Bigard] a lot darker and they gave us the cold cream and so forth, when we were through, to go there and wash it off and take all that stuff off. Oh, it was awful.<sup>57</sup>

*Ellington spent the final days of July, all of August and the first couple of days of September 1930 on the RKO set filming Check and Double Check. On 6 September the band was back in New York, before going out on tour.*

RUTH ELLINGTON: We would go to the Paramount Theatre and sit there and applaud and after a couple of thousand people finish applauding, my mother was still applauding!<sup>58</sup>

*The New York premiere of Check and Double Check was on 31 October 1930.*