



BLUE LIGHT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DUKE ELLINGTON SOCIETY UK
VOLUME 21 NUMBER 2 SUMMER 2014



**Keynotes, lectures
and concerts by
international experts
May 14-18**

All Ellington
Braggin' in Strings
May 15, 20.30
Bimhuis

Matt Cooper
*Piano Transcriptions
and Interpretations*
May 15, 16.00
Conservatorium
van Amsterdam

Calefax Reed Quintet
*Such Sweet Thunder
and The River*
May 17, 15.45
Conservatorium
van Amsterdam

**David Berger and the
Conservatorium
Concert Big Band**
Black, Brown and Beige
May 17, 21.00
North Sea Jazz Club

22ND INTERNATIONAL
DUKE ELLINGTON
STUDY GROUP CONFERENCE
hosted by Conservatorium van Amsterdam

Tickets: www.ellington-2014.nl - www.northseajazzclub.com -
www.bimhuis.nl - Conservatorium van Amsterdam: at the door
Program: www.ellington-2014.nl



Conservatorium van Amsterdam
Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de Kunsten



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Humphrey Lyttelton (25 April 2008)
Louie Bellson (14 February 2009)
Joya Sherrill (28 June 2010)
Alice Babs (11 February, 2014)
Herb Jeffries (25 May 2014)

Membership of Duke Ellington Society UK costs £20 per year. Members receive quarterly a copy of the Society's journal *Blue Light*.

Payment may be made by:

Cheque, payable to DESUK drawn on a Sterling bank account and sent to The Treasurer, 38 Thurlstone Avenue, London, N12 0LP, UK

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Overseas members may send a Sterling International Money Order.

Membership fees for 2014 are due for payment by 31st December 2013.

- Victor Lawrance, Treasurer

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SOCIETY NOTICES

DESUk London Social Meetings:

Civil Service Club, 13-15 Great Scotland Yard, London SW1; off Whitehall, Trafalgar Square end. 2nd Saturdays of the month, 2pm.
Sat 9 August, 2.00pm **Roger Boyes** will present *Hot Summer Dance*.
Tel.: 01342 314053; email: ap@antonypepper.com

Manchester Jazz Society:

Meets Thursdays 7:45 pm for 8:00 pm at the Unicorn, Church Street, off Oldham Street, M4 1PW
Contact: Eddie Little: 0161 881 3995
Email: tmonk52@hotmail.com

Sheffield Jazz Society:

Meets fortnightly at 1.45 pm on Mondays at Meersbrook Park United Reformed Church, Chesterfield Road/Beeton Road corner
Contact. Edmund Gregory: 0114 230 3742

TDES (New York):

Meets Wednesdays. St Peter's Church, Lexington Ave at 54th St, NYC, 7.30pm. For information contact Roger Boyes

Chris Addison, DESUK's Publicity Officer, is appealing to members to give him contact details for jazz and other music societies that they are aware of in their local area. He will then make contact to tell them of our existence, perhaps offer an Ellington-themed presentation, and encourage their supporters to join us. Contact details above.

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Editorial

If ever proof were needed that the legacy of his music is as rich and vital, as alive as ever, then the International Duke Ellington Conference 2014 held last month in Amsterdam was proof indeed.

By all accounts – not least Geoff Smith's which forms this month's lead story – the gathering was a huge success and enjoyed greatly by all those fortunate enough to attend.

The conference also marked the fortieth anniversary of Duke Ellington's passing which fell on 24 May. Two major articles in this edition of *Blue Light* commemorate the date. Graham Colombé's piece *Keys to the Duke* is a contemporary piece published originally in 1974. We are pleased to include it here. Graham's reflections are as prescient and perceptive today as they were forty years ago. Forty years on, Roger Boyes has written a newly commissioned piece especially for this edition which reviews the efforts of those keepers of the flame – musicians, scholars, discographers, writers and collectors – whose work is testament to Ellington's artistry and his industry; his inexhaustible contribution to music.

The day following the fortieth anniversary of Ellington's death saw the passing of Herb Jeffries who celebrated his hundredth birthday just a few months earlier. We shall pay proper tribute next issue.

Following my brief review of the new recording of *A Drum Is A Woman* in *BL* 21/1, Tony Faulkner wrote to say that the scores used by Martin Hathaway and the Guildhall Jazz Band for their performance at Ellington 2012 were not transcriptions but the direct result of Tony's researches with Ellington's own manuscript scores at The Smithsonian. This recording demonstrates then, even greater fidelity to Ellington's original vision than I realised and the most complete account of the music for this project yet published. If you have not acquired your copy yet, details of how to do so are on page 21.

Ian Bradley

ELLINGTON 2014

On the Road with Duke Ellington

Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 14-18 May

A Chronological Overview by Geoff Smith



Traditional innovation was what Amsterdam was all about, old works and words of Duke. Enthusiasm, new interpretations, and scholarship were there in plenty, shared between speakers, musicians, and audience in the spirit of the Ellington conferences stretching back all the way one imagines to Washington DC in 1983.

The facilities for presentations, music, and socialising were splendid throughout, as was the organisation. The printed programme, logo, and poster, were imaginative and striking. Some remarked that the poster - see *Blue Light*'s cover - had a depiction of Ellington unlike any seen before. That's possibly true, but an intriguing thought is that it could indicate Duke with a mask disguising his face...

Formal proceedings were opened on 15 May by organisers Louis Tavecchio and Walter van de Leur with the dedication to Alice Babs and Sjef Hoefsmit. The Conservatorium van Amsterdam hosted the conference free of charge and the welcome was by Ruud van Dijk, head of conservatorium jazz department. I ceremonially handed-on the Eddie Lambert gavel and block from Ellington 2012, Woking.

Harvey Cohen's "keynote" address was on Ellington's place in American history, drawing on his book *Duke Ellington's America* and, essentially, how Duke combined his lifelong obsession with composing and how he created and sustained his reputation in all of his performing and commercial facets. No-one disagreed with his contention that Ellington was "probably the greatest composer America has ever produced" and Cohen's assessment of his high importance as a historical figure with his subverting and undercutting the prejudice surrounding him - with infiltration, not confrontation. Ellington, he said, was "a civil rights leader with a message of quality and achievement, and no-one else was doing it then".

Then came me, Geoff Smith, with my one-to-one interview with Duke on stage pre-concert in Portsmouth on 5 February 1967. An extract from *A Drum Is A Woman* by the Guildhall, London, aggregation - the Ellington 2012 concert CD of which

was issued at Amsterdam - was played in connection with what Duke told me about how he personally esteemed the work. (For the record, I was corrected later in my description of Duke wearing black sweater and slacks by guest of honour Mercedes Ellington and by Duke's nephew Stephen James. The colour would have been midnight blue; Duke never wore black.)

David Palmquist outlined his important day-by-day research, his Ellington working life and travels itinerary on the Internet, and how webpages were ideal for sharing such research as they are accessible to all and easy to keep up to date. He urged us all to contribute via tdwaw.ca. It should be noted that as with earlier conferences, he video-recorded the entire Amsterdam proceedings.

Italian musicologist Marcello Piras concentrated on *Black Beauty* as Duke's oldest musical portrait, contending that it actually sounded like Florence Mills and could be shown to be a tribute to her. Piras pointed to links between the portrait and her *I'm A Little Blackbird Looking For A Bluebird* recording. A series of repeated notes followed by an upward jump (the call of a hen) appearing 15 times on the original *Blackbird* lead-sheet was taken up by Duke who changed two pitches - "He didn't want to be sued" - and a new melody was born. There were other descriptive elements in his score which dispelled the idea of Ellington being an unschooled composer.

Jazz historian Carl Woideck's presentation on Ellington's encounters with Africa 1957-73 included unpublished photos of Duke in Senegal 1966 and Ethiopia 1973. Woideck gave examples of Duke's fascination with Africa stemming from an extended opportunity of playing with African drummer Guy Warren and his "talking drum" in the band in 1957 substituting for Sam Woodyard or playing with him. From 1960 onwards there was an upsurge in "African" titles. David Berger said the first movement of *Three Black Kings*, a tribute to Solomon, reflected a lot of Africa in it and Harvey Cohen wondered whether the involvement with Guy Warren could have been connected with *A Drum Is A Woman* in some way.

Matt Cooper rounded off the daytime session in the conservatorium's Blue Note hall with a masterly piano recital including transcriptions and, to the delight of his many admirers from Ellington 2012, his own interpretations of classic Ellington compositions. He paced his performance by grouping pieces under such headings as *Flaming Youth*, *Sophisticated Ladies*, *Audience Participation*, *Philosophy*, and *Sentimental Moods*. Next morning, 16 May, he was back with a keynote address on *Duke Ellington As Pianist*, based on his newly published book of the same title (College Music Society, £25.95). Cooper developed in words and at the piano the three practices he has identified in

Ellington's piano work, early stride, swing, and post-bop modern. Cooper's authority and musicianship brooks no argument. As for Duke, he ended up, said Cooper, "almost avant-garde in the best sense of the word".

Harnessing digital transformation of the original print, Ken Steiner offered resounding proof that the silent film *Headlines* (1925) contains the first appearance of Ellington on film. His great discovery was covered in *Blue Light* 20/2 and it is hard to overstate its historical importance. He started by showing a seven-minute clip on the screen and then dissected it in every way possible before confessing: "To me this is a dream come true." The Washingtonians – Bubber Miley, Prince Robinson, Otto Hardwick, Duke, Fred Guy, Sonny Greer, and Charles Irvis - are identified in the restored print. Restoration work was completed in 2013 and the discovery was officially announced by the Library Of Congress on Ellington's birthday 29 April of that year.

Making his second appearance at an Ellington conference, Luca Bragalini dwelt on *New World A'Comin'*, Duke's first work to be arranged for symphony orchestra, scored by Luther Henderson in 1949. Bragalini was sceptical about statements that Ellington had not read Roi Ottley's book (1946) and developed the theme that he expressed his civil rights politics by "saying it with the trombone". He also drew on the FBI investigations on Duke between 1938-70 and Duke's credits on the *New World A'Coming* Harlem radio programmes to show that Duke continued to "preach" his left-wing utopian political vision through music for three decades. David Schiff commented that the programmes were very much in the spirit of the Popular Front and Marcello Piras suggested we must come to terms with an Ellington nickname of the Artful Dodger arising from him protecting something or somebody.

Claude Carriere and Laurant Mignard from Paris shared the stage to promote their vision of presenting Ellington through performance of Mignard's Duke Orchestra and the Maison du Duke project, with Carriere as president. The joint aim was how best to contribute to the legacy and "get more Duke fans" (Mignard). Commendably, Mignard did not wish his to be the best orchestra in the world but that it should be honest with the music. Carriere said they did not want imitators of the great soloists but musicians who were experienced enough to get a faithful sound. More than 30 lectures had so far been organised by the Maison association, often given before concerts. They had founded the annual Provins Duke Festival in 2012 aimed at positioning Ellington at the heart of cultural events. Videos and CD extracts were shown and a display of colourful exhibition display panels, with captions in French, was mounted in the conservatorium

mezzanine. It is hoped to reproduce the panels in English shortly.

A bassist himself, Matthias Heyman tackled the Ellington-Blanton duet recordings under the title *Losing Count*, starting with *Body and Soul* where Blanton makes his instrument sound like a horn. He used many Kraft Music Hall broadcasts to emphasise his claim that Blanton remained an equal and interactive frontline partner of Ellington's throughout his time with the band. Heyman is currently doing his PhD research on Blanton at Antwerp.

In his role as artistic director of the National Jazz Museum in Harlem, Loren Schoenberg showcased an upcoming issue of Ellington air checks. *The Unheard Savory Ellington* comprises recordings made by the late audio engineer Bill Savory who worked for a New York transcription service, which had lines coming directly from radio networks. The result was particularly fine audio fidelity. An Ellington small group *China Boy* with Johnny Hodges on soprano, and a jam session with Django Reinhardt (1946 Carnegie Hall), were among items featured from 100 hours of broadcast material acquired by Schoenberg and lodged with the museum, and hopefully soon to be issued.

In an after-tea panel session with Harvey Cohen, Mercedes Ellington spoke of building her career in dance as choreographer and Broadway performer entirely separate from Duke and Mercer. She remembered complaining about rarely being at home and her grandfather telling her home was where the work was – on the road. Of her relationship with Duke, she said she did not know what to call him. Mercer checked and the inevitable answer came back, "Uncle Edward". Now she was working with the New York-based Duke Ellington Center For The Arts charity to secure and perpetuate the Ellington legacy. Pointing to the success of *Sophisticated Ladies* on Broadway, she said: "I would like to see all of Ellington's themed albums transferred to theatrical productions."

Southland Revisited (*Deep South Suite and New Orleans Suite*), David Schiff's keynote paper on 17 May, was curtailed because of the 30 minutes allocation for all presentations, Schiff omitting the latter suite altogether. In his typically entertaining manner he drew attention to Ellington's "astonishing range of large-scale masterpieces" with their "unprecedented sweep of music" compared with the four-movement quasi-symphonies such as the *Perfume Suite* and *Deep South*. He then equated the effect of the programmatic smaller pieces to the Mozart ballroom scene in *Don Giovanni* with its three types of dances. Posing the question of the various Duke train pieces heading north or south was another novel aspect of his lecture. *A-Train* heads uptown; *Daybreak Express* also heads north on a freedom-bound trajectory; whereas the suite's *Happy-Go-Lucky Local* is firmly

southwards with its hints of nostalgia (and horror?). In *Magnolias Dripping With Molasses*, the music exposes the pseudo-American southland through irony, he contended: The saxes play “Oh I wish I were...” as a repeated ostinato but never end “in Dixie”.

Italian composer and jazz lecturer Michele Corcella, who defended a thesis on Ellington’s film soundtracks, spoke on Duke’s relationship with Hollywood being *A Tormented Love*. He praised the main title of *Anatomy Of A Murder* as a very powerful composition in which every single voice in the orchestra can be heard. But as background music the “sound we love so much” was often too dense and not suitable behind dialogue. He was not surprised, therefore, that no music was heard in the long trial scenes.

Giving his latest update on his oral history project, Bill Saxonis reminded the conference that people who knew Ellington were rapidly declining in number. Now, instead of “Duke said to me” it was becoming “I read or heard that Duke said...”. He had interviewed Terry Teachout at length for his 2014 radio show on WCDB, Albany, New York State, and thought the author honestly believed in what he had written, nothing in the book detracting from his (Teachout’s) view that Ellington was one of the greatest composers of the 20th Century. This was too much for Loren Schoenberg, who interjected with inferences about intellect and prejudice, (which he repeated in the conference’s concluding panel discussion about Ellington biographies). Saxonis praised Ellington 2012 for leading him to material and interviews for subsequent broadcasts, particularly the Dave Brubeck interview recorded for the Woking conference.

A newcomer to the conference scene, Catherine Tackley, senior music lecturer of Britain’s Open University, traced Ellington’s tours and interviews in the UK under the title *Art or Debauchery?*, taken from an early headline. She outlined Ellington’s important role in the history of British jazz.

Amsterdam joint-organiser Walter van de Leur had the day’s final presentation slot with “*People Wrap Their Lunches In Them*”: *Ellington And Notation* on the relationship between manuscript autographs and performance/performers. He reminded delegates that because the scores were not intended for use outside the orchestra itself, writers often downplay the role of manuscripts in Ellington’s work. He cited critics Giddins and Deveau who in their book *Jazz* had called Ellington’s jottings “a copyist’s nightmare”. Walter’s close reading of the score of *I Never Felt This Way Before* (1940), held the audience spellbound despite it being “run-of-the-mill, zero-effort level of everyday work” for Ellington. “If you know the roadmap and can follow all the pieces of paper you can pretty much work out what is going on,” he said. Yet once the record was done there was often no future

need for the manuscript. Yet again, musical notation was an integral part of Ellington’s composing – “His music is simply unthinkable without it.”

The daytime session ended with a complete performance by the Calefax Reed Quintet of *The River* and *Such Sweet Thunder*. The big-band integration of these “reedy” instruments in the hands of masterly musicians was intense and, at appropriate moments, swinging like mad. The concert was professionally recorded in the Blue Note so one can hope for a much deserved wider listenership in due course.

Ellington’s nephew Stephen James, first up after a power failure delayed the start on 18 May, was unquestionably the conference star at evoking the on-the-road theme. He was on the road and in on all the action with his Uncle Edward and the band for years, starting when aged five years he was backstage with Duke and everyone at the Apollo and continuing “living in a time capsule” to the very end. Stephen is preparing a memoir and on this showing has no shortage of fun and serious anecdotal stuff to impart. James confirmed and elaborated upon many stories and incidents relayed by previous speakers, making his presence in Amsterdam a total delight.

A memorial tribute to Alice Babs by Bo Hausman, vice-president of the Duke Ellington Society of Sweden and editor of its magazine, included Alice’s first recorded performance, *Dinah* (1938 or 39), made in a record booth, and a recording rarity, *There’s Something About Me*, composed and sung by Duke for Alice at Ruth Ellington’s home.

Delegates approached the final presentation with mixed feelings and, for me at least, in some trepidation, for raw emotion could easily have dominated the debate on Ellington biographies. Happily, verbal violence was avoided, all concerned making an effort to contain themselves when considering the merits or otherwise of the recent Teachout book. Walter van de Leur chaired the discussion with Loren Schoenberg, Catherine Tackley, and William McFadden, President of the Duke Ellington Society, Washington and editor of its *Ellingtonia*. I venture to suggest that it was Tackley who made the best points by questioning the role of biography, suggesting it is impossible to write an unbiased biography, and “if we try to suppress the individuality of biographers we are treading on very dangerous ground”.



Keys to the Duke

By Graham Colombé



The following article was published originally in May 1974 in Volume 1, Number 6 of the magazine 'Into Jazz'. Graham Colombé has generously allowed us to republish the essay here, forty years on, to commemorate the anniversary of Duke Ellington's passing. Minor amendments have been made to the piece by the author.

The President paid tribute and the body lay in state. Ella sang at the New York funeral and in St. Martin-In-The-Fields, amazingly, Adelaide Hall performed **Creole Love Call** forty-seven years after the first recording. *The Times* printed a select and partially titled list of those who attended the service and the world had done its posthumous duty by a great man. But through all the solemnity and protocol one question naggingly repeated itself to me. How many people understood *why* he was great?

The Jamaican students I teach knew he was black and a musician and dead, yet they mostly thought he had played the saxophone or trumpet. Even many of those who attended his concerts seemed to think his primary achievement was the writing of **Mood Indigo** and **Satin Doll**. The true appreciation of Ellington's art will probably remain the province of a small number, hopefully including most of our readers; it is possible however that Ellington the uniquely twentieth century phenomenon, the incessantly travelling, band-leading composer-on-the-move may yet be known to more people than Ellington the recording artist. And even we connoisseurs still have much to learn about Duke if we are inquisitive. The mixture of charm, irony and eloquence which he put across so coolly on the concert

stage must have aroused in many a curiosity to know more about what kind of man he was. That is the question I hope to begin to answer with the help of Duke's autobiography, *Music Is My Mistress* (Doubleday), and occasional references to his piano playing.

Let us accept from the outset the probability that Ellington was a bundle of paradoxes – a description he might have agreed with quite willingly. So much bewilderingly varied and beautiful music is not the likely product of a straightforward one-dimensional man; the artistic flame needs some internal friction to set it alight. Consider how Ellington portrays himself in the first chapter of his book as he makes his typical latter-day, concert hall entrance: 'A grinning fellow enters. He bounces along, almost swaggering, apparently casual, but trying to hide the stage fright he expects any minute. When he gets to the microphone, no matter what position it's in, he has to readjust it, or fidget with it, or fondle with it.' After the introduction of the 'new, young apprentice piano-player' the self-portrait continues: 'He gestures expectantly to the wings, but no one enters, so he goes immediately to the piano stool and sits down. The stool is almost always in the wrong position, but he doesn't change it, and he starts plunking the piano.' Thus the book begins with a tone of self-mockery and self-deprecation. Yet nearly five hundred pages later we find a straight-faced presentation of a twelve-page list of 'Honors and Awards' (including, amongst *Downbeat* poll victories and honorary degrees, the appointments as Deputy Sheriff of Lackawanna County and Marshal of Dodge City). How do we reconcile these seemingly opposed

attitudes? Perhaps Ellington saw the awards as signs of progress for his race, rather than reasons for personal pride. At school he was taught: 'as representatives of the Negro race we were to command respect for our people.'

Ellington's attitude to his blackness demanded another dichotomy from which, characteristically, he did not shrink. He wanted to start to assert the black identity of his music, and the identity of black Americans as a special group with special problems, yet at the same time he wished to unite people of different races (and nations) rather than divide them. His approach to racial problems was therefore subtle and humorous rather than direct and aggressive. Of his show called *Jump For Joy* he writes: 'The original script has Uncle Tom on his death bed with all his children dancing around him singing: "He lived to a ripe old age. Let him go, God bless him."' There was a Hollywood producer on one side of the bed and a Broadway producer on the other side, and both were trying to keep him alive by injecting adrenalin into his arms!' The problem of playing black music but relating to everyone he solved panoramically by playing everything. Funky, growling blues, smoothly swinging dance music, sweetly singable melodies, complex harmonies and tone colours, and eventually concerts with symphony orchestras and in churches ensured the broadest possible spectrum of contact. Yet the origin and centre never became obscured. To Papa Tall, a Senegalese artist, Ellington explained: 'Jazz is a tree, a most unusual tree. ... and the blossoms, if you notice, come out and present themselves in all sizes, shapes and colours. ... But as we study it more deeply, we find that its very blue-rooted roots are permanently married to and firmly ensconced in, the rich black earth of beautiful Black Africa.' After that it is instructive to listen to the highly impressionistic piano piece, *Springtime In Africa*, with its echoes of Debussy. Having helped to spread African influences around the world, Ellington would no doubt have liked to make Africans more familiar with European musical idioms.

Ellington's background might, of course, have turned him away from Africa at an early age. I recently read Sam Greenlee's *The Spook Who Sat By The Door*, which contains a lot of contempt for the Washington middle-class blacks who wish they were white. Ellington writes: 'I don't know how many castes of Negroes there were in the city at that time, but I do know that if you decided to mix carelessly with another you would be told that one just doesn't do that sort of thing.' Two factors may have kept him from adopting the prevailing narrow attitude. In the first place he was probably more aware of belonging to a family than a class, and he saw his family and

therefore himself as very special. In fact he provides a prologue to his book which opens like a fairy-tale: 'Once upon a time a beautiful lady and a very handsome young man fell in love and got married.' These were his parents. His father valued manners but was no snob: 'He was also a wonderful wit and he knew exactly what to say to a lady – whether high-toned or honey-homey'. (Of course the description applies equally to the son.) This gentle parental push towards social mobility was encouraged when Ellington's adolescent curiosity took him into the poolrooms where 'Guys from all walks of life seemed to converge'. There were college students and dining-car waiters, gamblers and forgers of signatures, and of course musicians. 'There were also a couple of pickpockets around, so smooth that when they went to New York they were not allowed in the subway. At heart they were all great artists.' Ellington observed and listened and dug them all. Small wonder then, when his orchestral music developed a few years later, that it should be so delightfully spiced with variety. The genteel Hardwicke and the earthy Nanton were both appreciated by Ellington, as people and as musicians.

In recent concerts Ellington habitually concluded, after much brass and fury, with a delicate, lyrical piano solo – *Lotus Blossom*. The simple, gentle feelings expressed in this piece were for its writer, Billy Strayhorn, but he had become almost a brother to Ellington and these feelings, as in the verbal tribute to Strayhorn, seemed to sum up Ellington's attitude to his family. It was totally dedicated, loving and admiring, and totally uncritical. (The breakdown of his own youthful marriage must have been a great disappointment to him and it is barely mentioned in the book.) In later years he came to associate this family feeling of love and trust with God, and some of his attempts to express this simplicity in words and music can seem surprisingly naïve beside his more complex and self-conscious achievements. But Ellington had two families, and if he related simply and inwardly to God through one, his complicated and outward-looking relationship with the world came through his second family – the band. As Ellington emphasises, the band usually stayed together for 'fifty-two weeks in the year'. He must certainly have had more contact with Harry Carney over the last half-century than most men ever have with their brothers. At first, Duke's relationships were comradely in the extreme. On the 1939 voyage to Sweden the seas were rough all the way and Duke and Rex Stewart preferred not to try sleeping. 'When the other cats finally went to bed, Rex and I would still be up playing head-and-head poker.' One night, after composing *Morning Glory* together, they went up to the wheelhouse and were horrified to find it empty. 'When we told the cats in the band that

there was nobody in the wheelhouse, they all promptly got stoned. We did our night-duty every night thereafter until we arrived in Le Havre.’ In the later years of air-travel, as the age gap between Duke and younger band-members widened, he became more detached and avuncular. Paul Gonsalves said of course: ‘You have been like a father to me.’

Through the years the band contained a collection of remarkable individuals and Duke observed their personalities as carefully as he listened to their music. ‘I am the world’s greatest listener,’ he said, which was why he could write such appropriate compositions and arrangements for his soloists. But there was a dimension to his listening which most of his audience could not share. Besides hearing his musicians play his music he was hearing them play themselves. What they played he could relate not only to what he knew of them in general but also to their daily frustrations and joys. That is why, although his sketches in the book of most of the band’s musicians are disappointingly short, many of his comments provide invaluable insight: ‘Rex Stewart had been taught the responsibility of commanding respect for his race and to this end, he maintained an offstage image very deliberately. It was a dignified, decent-sort-of-chap image and he never strayed very far away from it, so that he was always posing to some extent and never really relaxed. It is possible that tensions and conflicts came from this and were apparent in his music...’

It is natural to wonder to what extent this need to keep up an image affected Ellington himself. I wrote last month of the probability that there was some special relationship between Ellington and Paul Gonsalves. Ellington writes of Paul: ‘He will stand around and talk and socialise with people all night, whether or not he knows them, and always says, “They’re some beautiful cats, man”.’ This phrase, ‘beautiful cats’, turns up again and again in the book as Ellington notes more of Paul’s contacts, and there are also a number of references to Paul’s capacity for total and, perhaps unwise, enjoyment. At Frank Sinatra’s birthday party, ‘Who do you think had the most fun? Nobody but Paul Gonsalves. He had to be carried out bodily. I thanked Francis and told him it was the best party he ever gave for Paul Gonsalves!’ In Brazil, Ellington turns on the hotel television and ‘Who do you think is the first person I see? Paul Gonsalves.’ The programme was coming ‘live’ from a nearby club: ‘If the camera moves towards him he moves towards the camera, so there are some gigantic confrontations. At first I am a little concerned about our image, since this is an immediate contrast with our earnest diplomatic work earlier in the evening, but everything turns out for the best, and everybody seems very happy.’ That last remark, combined with Ellington’s immense tolerance for Paul’s vagaries, is all too

revealing. Obviously he would have liked at times to feel able to forget his image and let himself go, as Paul did so often. But he had to be content with Paul’s doing it for him.

Though Ellington was probably as fulfilled a man as anyone can expect to be, there were obvious frustrations – such as the one just suggested. And a man of his sensitivity would never cut himself off from the problems of others. So it is no surprise that his blues on the piano were always convincing. The trio recording of *Blues For Jerry* from *Piano In The Foreground* opens bleakly and builds through some Monkish phrases to chords of great intensity. The gamut of Ellington’s sensibilities can be measured by his keyboard touch, which could range from snowflake delicacy to thunderous ferocity. In *Summertime*, from the same album, against Sam Woodyard’s almost perversely awkward hammering, Ellington bangs out fiercely some obsessive, repeated phrases which offer a most unusual revelation of what was behind the cool façade. There is a parallel in the book to this rare loss of poise and restraint; it occurs in the magnificently written final chapter. Ellington experimented with words as he did with notes, though not always with the same success, but this chapter entitled *Pedestrian Minstrel* and written in a ‘stream of consciousness’, Joycean style, is a masterpiece. The experience of travelling by train suddenly explodes into an extended Freudian metaphor: ‘he gave her the high ball in the Loop, stopped in Englewood, and that’s all she wrote, grinding up to ninety miles per hour, so hot the steam was bursting out everywhere. She had fine lubrication. You could hear her for miles, whistle-screaming, “Yes, daddy, I’m coming, daddy”.’ This is eventually linked to a passage conveying the involvement both of preparing the music and of listening to it: ‘Blow Cootie up to the ceiling, make Cat go tooting through the roof, jam Sam into a Charleston beat, let Paul go-go, running through the lattice-work of brass cacophony, while Jimmy weaves delicate lacework around the edges. Give Harry that “molto profondo” so that Lawrence will cry and wail in the wake of the après-coup. Stomp down, those symmetrical after-beats, baby, so that Rab can smelt the melody to smoldering, and over the hush let’s hear the broads in the back row whisper, “Tell the story, daddy”.’

During the last fifteen years, Duke’s greatest pleasure after the music must have been his world-wide travelling. He writes at length and with obvious enjoyment of the people, the food, the drink and the climate in many countries. Unlike the stereotype of the American tourist who reckons to capture all with his camera, Duke was interested in communication: ‘Communication itself is what baffles the multitude. It is both so difficult and so simple. Of all man’s fears, I think men are most afraid of being what they are – in

direct communication with the world at large. They fear reprisals, the most personal of which is that they *won't be understood*'. Ever since Duke had realised he could get on with people who could not get on with each other, he had been anxious to promote understanding in place of suspicion. He was delighted when different races and different religions were united for his Sacred Concert in Orange, France: 'The choir in Barcelona... were Catholics of course, and when I heard them singing in the ancient Roman amphitheatre in Orange with Alice Babs from Stockholm, Tony Watkins from Philadelphia, and our band of musicians all from the USA, before a perceptive and very appreciative French audience – then I felt the ecumenical spirit was really working.' Ellington became involved with the rebuilding of the Château de Goutelas, and preceded his solo piano performance at the inauguration of the first restored wing with these words: 'I have been made an honorary citizen of many cities and countries, but the honour of participating in the rebuilding of Goutelas is by far the most moving. To be here to help celebrate the rebuilding of this beautiful château by the men who came together from the greatest extremes of religious, political and intellectual beliefs is an experience, and a majestic manifestation of humanism, that I shall never forget ... To be accepted as a brother by these heroic human beings leaves me breathless.' To these attainments of blending and uniting I would like to add one guessed at by myself. The first song by Alice Babs at the Ellington concert in Westminster Abbey last October was apparently called *My Love, My Love*. The tune, the singing and the piano accompaniment had the warmth and freshness of a love song from woman to man, but the opening line in full was: 'My love, my love, my God, my love.' Would it be unreasonable to suggest that Ellington wanted to bring sensuality back under the church's roof where it had been considered for so long a danger?

It would be a mistake to give an impression that Ellington was a faultless, saintly man, because it would not take into account his human, worldly side. In Birmingham in 1971, when an unfortunate lighting-man failed to illuminate Norris Turney for *Checkered Hat*, Ellington stopped the performance, strode aggressively to the microphone chewing his gum, clamoured for light, and then completed the humiliation by saying to the audience: 'Sorry, ladies and gentlemen – desperately unprofessional.' A couple of years before, in Dobell's record shop, I had heard Ben Webster tell John Kendall of a night when Art Tatum was in the house but Duke obstinately refused to recognise him and allow him a round of applause. 'But don't get me wrong,' Ben added quickly, 'if I ever loved anyone I loved Duke Ellington.'

So too did many others – and he loved them: 'I have been received by presidents, first ladies, kings, queens, maharajahs, maharanees, champions, chief justices, chefs de cuisine, painters, sculptors, screen stars, butchers, bakers, doctors, lawyers, dishwashers and street-cleaners. It would be very difficult to say whom I enjoyed more.' It would be equally difficult to say who enjoyed him more. Perhaps Paul Gonsalves paid the ultimate compliment when he said: 'I think I would like to be like you.'

This outline must end as it began – with one final paradox. 'I am an optimist,' says Ellington, but *Pedestrian Minstrel*, which might have been called *Revelations*, offers this vision of the future: 'After people have destroyed all people everywhere, I see heaping mounds of money strewn over the earth, floating on and sinking into the sea. The animals and fish, who have no use for money, are kicking it out of the way and splattering it with dung ... Then the green leaves of trees and grass will give up their chlorophyll, so that the sea, the wind, the beasts and the birds will play and sing Nature's old sweet melody and rhythm. But since you are people, you will not, unfortunately, be here to hear it.' Fortunately, though, we have been here to hear Duke Ellington. As Duke might well have said about somebody else, we have been chronologically privileged to overlap his beautiful life-span. I suspect we won't fully realise our loss until Mercer Ellington brings the Duke Ellington band over here without its creator.



Forty Years On by Roger Boyes

Since Duke Ellington died on 24 May 1974 his reputation has remained consistently high. There has been no period of neglect followed by reappraisal, and for him the whims of fashion seem not to apply. Now as then, Duke is a dominant figure in jazz and the music's pre-eminent composer, and he is increasingly accepted as a leading light of twentieth-century music generally. Few seriously question this view, though re-evaluation of Billy Strayhorn's role has refined attitudes, and the '*petit-maitre*' tag first attached to Duke long ago persists.¹ Also, the 'knowledgeable' jazz constituency tends to divide between those who value Ellington and 'get' him, and those who value Ellington but don't. A litmus test of an enthusiast's position in this regard might be, do you admire Ellington and Basie but prefer to listen to Basie? Or do you admire Basie and Ellington but prefer to listen to Ellington? In the USA Duke is now a national cultural 'icon', a role model for the young, and an area of academic study. There are Ellington statues and plaques, and streets, bridges, parks and schools are named (or renamed) for him. Postage stamps and a quarter-dollar coin bear his portrait.

Soon after Duke's death previously unissued compositions like the *Latin American Suite* and the *Afro-Eurasian Eclipse*, and two late collaborations, the piano sessions with Ray Brown (*This One's For Blanton*) and with Brown, Joe Pass and Louie Bellson (*Duke's Big Four*), appeared on record. *The Queen's Suite* was issued commercially, as Duke had intended it should.

Gallic thoroughness brought two series of LP issues to completion, the 24 volumes of *Ellington Intégrale* on RCA-France, and the double albums of the *Chronologique* series on French CBS. Their CD successors are the 24-disc RCA 'red box' centennial edition of 1999, and the Mosaic sets of small-group (2006) and full-band (2010) recordings from 1932 to 1940. DESUK member Steven Lasker was much involved in all three CD projects. Alexandre Rado's *Masters of Jazz* CD series reached vol.12, long enough to reach the January 1931 *Whoopie Makers* session. Mosaic issued the complete 1953-55 Capitols, and also the complete Reprise recordings, a set enhanced by the scholarly notes of Mark Tucker, written shortly before his untimely death in 2000.

From 1956 on Duke had recorded a lot of music at his own expense. Recordings from this 'stockpile' began to surface in the 1970s, at first in a small way, later in large-scale issues like the MFD/Black Lion 'famous five-LP set', and the ten *Private Collection* CDs of the 1980s. Eventually his son Mercer entrusted the stockpile to Danish Radio, and from time to time

Storyville Records of Copenhagen issue material from it.

Live recordings are at least as important to our understanding of the Ellington Orchestra as all these welcome additions to the catalogue. Columbia's powerful and best-selling 1956 Newport LP had led the way, and in the 1960s 'unofficial' issues of music from the euphoric Fargo dance had shown that live recordings were a necessary supplement, even to the treasured 1940 Victors. After Duke's death live issues proliferated. By the 1980s we had Fargo, complete, and there had been commercial releases of the 1940s Carnegie Hall concerts, the 1957 Carrolltown dance, and many other live performances, from the late 1930s to the 1970s. More recently, the Zürich CD from 1950 and issues of early-1950s dance dates in the Pacific north-west have brought further correctives to the studio recordings of that period. DVDs of concert and TV appearances add yet another dimension to our understanding and appreciation.

Two other rich sources began to be mined soon after Duke's death. Transcriptions recorded for broadcasting purposes during the 1940s allow us to hear performances freed from the constraint of the three-minute 78 rpm record. Even better, the 1943 World Broadcasting ones brought us the band in a year when the Petrillo ban silenced the record companies. The other source is the large number of radio broadcasts that survived, especially after tape recording became widespread. The first, dating from Duke's return to the Cotton Club in 1937 and 1938, were recently reissued on Storyville. Listening to the early ones can be a bit like looking at a Byzantine wall painting – a tantalizing, often imperfect, glimpse into a long-vanished age – and their evocative power is just as great. Pre-eminent among the broadcasts are the weekly Treasury Shows from 1945-46. Privately taped music from these began to appear on LP soon after Duke died, but eventually the original shows, restored by Jack Towers, who had recorded Fargo back in 1940, were pieced together by Benny Aasland and Jerry Valburn, and issued, complete, on a monumental series of LPs. They are now reappearing on two-CD sets, supplemented by other broadcasts from the period. Again, Storyville Records are the driving force behind this valuable enterprise.

There has been a welcome move over the years from 'tidied-up' selections for release on LP to 'warts-and-all' complete issues, with inlay notes increasingly entrusted to perceptive, often scholarly, annotators like Steven Lasker and Andrew Homzy, and the late Eddie Lambert, Mark Tucker and Annie Kuebler. Accurate and informative notes and high-end sound restoration add value to any release, and are vital in an age when much of the music itself can be found on-line.

Although the whims of record companies persist, more of Duke's music is readily available today than ever.

In contrast to the record shelf the Ellington bookshelf was tiny in 1974, and the most recent addition, Duke's own strange volume of revelation through omission *Music Is My Mistress*, was still very new. At first the shelf expanded slowly. In 1977, Derek Jewell's *Duke – a Portrait of Duke Ellington* drew on earlier accounts of the story and the author's more recent first-hand encounters. A year later Mercer Ellington's *Duke Ellington in Person* offered his view of his relationship with his father and a measure of insight into the workings of the Orchestra and Ellington family dynamics. As with Duke's memoir, Stanley Dance kept an eye on what was revealed and what stayed undisclosed. Don George's 1981 *The Real Duke Ellington (Sweet Man in USA)* was a raconteur's offering, bitty, gossipy, self-serving. It told tales about Duke's vigorous sex life, with no sign of Dance's *imprimatur*.

The pace began to hot up in 1988. Peter Gammond was the wrong choice for the Ellington volume in the *Apollo Jazz Masters* series. James Lincoln Collier's *Duke Ellington* covered the ground in some detail to 1943, at which point he gave up, ending with a fifty-page sketch of the second half of Duke's career which didn't properly address its subject at all. He also peddled the notion that Duke was not really a composer, but merely worked up the ideas of the musicians in his band, putting his name on the results. The notion has proved durable, and it crops up again in Terry Teachout's recent (2013) book, which is now likely to succeed Collier as the first-call Ellington biography.

A much better book than Collier's soon followed. Gunther Schuller's *The Swing Era* considered a slice of Duke's music in detail, devoting over 100 pages to the studio recordings from 1932 to the start of the Petrillo ban, plus *Black Brown And Beige*. Unfortunately it is marred by a superficial concluding survey of Duke's later career, entirely unnecessary as it falls outside the book's remit. In the same year Schuller and André Hodeir, a French critic well known for his antipathy to Ellington's later music, jointly contributed the Ellington entry to *Grove Jazz*. The books of Collier and Schuller, and the entry in *Grove Jazz*, have encouraged a regrettable and persistent tendency to prize Duke's earlier music at the expense of his later achievements.

Ken Rattenbury's *Duke Ellington – Jazz Composer* (1990) examined in close (and much criticized) detail five of the 1940 Victors. In 1991 the first scholarly work by a university academic appeared, Mark Tucker's *Ellington - The Early Years*. It ended at 1927, the year when most record collectors' interest begins. In 1993 he published *The Duke Ellington Reader*, an

invaluable and wide-ranging compilation of significant, often long out of print, journalism spanning Duke's entire career. In the same year he edited an issue of the *Black Music Research Journal* devoted entirely to *Black, Brown and Beige*. Tucker's early death was a great loss to Ellington scholarship.

Since the mid-1990s the Ellington bookshelf has expanded rapidly. Some writers still tackled Duke's entire life and career. John Hasse's *Beyond Category* (1995) and Stuart Nicholson's *A Portrait of Duke Ellington* (1999) were well thought of; Austin H Lawrence's *Duke Ellington and his World* (2001) much less so. Curiously, one of the best is the one most severely constrained for space – David Bradbury's 2005 contribution to Haus Publishing's *Life and Times* series.

Others concentrated on specific aspects of the story. Kurt Dietrich's *Duke's Bones* (1995) looks at the place of the trombones in the Ellington Orchestra. Janna Tull Steed's *Duke Ellington – A Spiritual Biography* (1999) is a short, balanced examination of the impact on his work of Duke's Christianity. *Backstory In Blue* by John F Morton (2008) focusses on the famous 1956 Newport Jazz Festival performance. John Francheschina's *Duke Ellington's Music for the Theatre* (2001) covers a previously neglected area in which Duke achieved less success. Recent scholarly studies consider Duke's role in the birth of concert jazz (John Howland's *Ellington Uptown* 2009); his career in the context of contemporary US social history (Harvey Cohen's *Duke Ellington's America* 2010); and his standing *vis-à-vis* his fellow-composers (David Schiff's *The Ellington Century* 2012). In recent years interest has grown in Duke's achievement as a pianist, a previously underrated aspect of his art. It is now (2014) the subject of a new book, *Duke Ellington as Pianist*, by Prof. Matthew J Cooper of Oregon. Unashamedly non-scholarly are three impressionistic essays in French by Alain Paillet: *Plaisir d'Ellington* (1998), *Duke's Place* (2002), and *Ko-Ko* (2011).

Most of these books are the work of journalists or, increasingly, academics. The details of the recordings and the Ellington itinerary have been the preserve of enthusiasts. The first discography, *A Handlist of Duke Ellington's Recorded Music*, by Victor Carol Calver of Ipswich in Suffolk, had appeared as long ago as 1934. Chronicling the ever-growing list of new discoveries and re-releases was a thriving cottage industry by the 1970s, when Benny Aasland of Sweden led the field with his *Wax Works of Duke Ellington* 'listed for advanced collectors'. By the end of the century there were two standard discographies. *The New DESOR* is an update in two massive volumes of their earlier series of booklets by the Italians, Luciano Massagli and Giovanni M Volonté. *Ellingtonia* is a one-volume

comprehensive guide by the Canadian collector and DESUK member W E Timmer, now in its fifth edition.

In 1979 Aasland launched the Duke Ellington Music Society, a forum in which serious collectors could raise queries and exchange information about recorded Ellingtonia, and make corrections to the discographies. Findings were circulated in a quarterly *Bulletin* for members. Sjef Hoefsmit, who had soon begun to play a leading role in DEMS, took over the *Bulletin* after Benny died in 1996, and continued to publish it until his own death in 2012. Latterly it appeared thrice-yearly, and all the *Bulletins* are now freely available on-line. Their content is not limited to discographical issues. Aasland's own comprehensive collection is now in the care of the Duke Ellington Society, Sweden.

Joseph H Igo was the first enthusiast to systematically compile a day-by-day itinerary of Ellington's travels and appearances, and Gordon Ewing of Illinois and Art Pilkington of Toronto continued Igo's work after he died. The *Igo Itinerary* was not published, but Klaus Stratemann based the 'interludes' (chronicled annals of the band's activities) on it, in his 1992 survey of Duke's appearances on film, *Duke Ellington – Day By Day and Film By Film*. Klaus's book provided in turn the basis for Ken Vail's two-volume *Duke's Diary* (1999, 2002). More recently others, notably Ken Steiner and David Palmquist, have added new entries to the list by accessing newspaper archives and other sources via the internet. The focus of much of the activity involving research, discussion and the exchange of information is now on-line, and a quick search will soon lead to the relevant sites.

Two books take a critical look at Duke's recordings. The first to appear, in 1994 in Italy, was *Duke Ellington – Un Genio, Un Mito*, by Antonio Berini and Giovanni M Volonté. The second was Eddie Lambert's *Duke Ellington – A Listener's Guide* (1999, though written much earlier: Eddie's untimely death was in 1986). Eddie's book is still the only thorough critical survey of the Ellington *oeuvre* in English, and its delayed appearance was regrettable. It is only because of the persistence and determination of Elaine Nornworthy that it appeared at all.

In the late 1980s the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC acquired from the Ellington family Duke's scores, personal and business documents, scrapbooks and memorabilia. A team of archivists and volunteers led by the late Annie Kuebler catalogued the Ellington Archive, which is located in the National Museum of American History, where anyone may consult it by appointment. Tom Whaley's collection is also there, and other important archive material is in the care of e.g., the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University in Newark NJ, and at Yale. Strayhorn family members in the Pittsburgh area look after the

Billy Strayhorn Collection, in accordance with Billy's wishes.

A Duke Ellington Jazz Society existed in Los Angeles as far back as 1958, and similar societies have formed in many places since then. Not all have survived, but in addition to DESUK, Ellington societies are currently active in New York, Toronto, Washington DC, Los Angeles, Sweden and Paris. Their purpose is to promote the Ellington-Strayhorn legacy in the cities and countries they serve. Activities include programmes of meetings, support for recording projects, and live performances. All produce a regular newsletter for members, and the Swedish Society's *Bulletin* and DESUK's *Blue Light* in particular are substantial publications.

In 1983 a group of keen Ellington collectors and enthusiasts gathered informally in Chicago. A second meeting, held a year later in Washington, led to Ellington's 85 in Oldham and the annual international conferences which followed, uninterrupted, until 2000. Part scholarly gatherings, part enthusiasts' celebrations, and part reunions of Ellington associates and musicians, they were coordinated by local *ad hoc* groups, independent of though often linked with local societies. They attracted a large and loyal following which evolved in an almost familial way. Occasional meetings still take place; the most recent (May 2014) was in Amsterdam.

Many universities and music colleges now offer diploma and degree courses in jazz studies, and Duke's music features prominently in the ensembles in which their students play. As a result, an ever-growing number of players and music teachers around the world are well versed in the Ellington legacy. DESUK member Tony Faulkner has a special place in this activity, since his DERO group at Leeds College of Music had an exclusively Ellington-Strayhorn repertoire. Musicians produce performance charts transcribed from the recordings, helped in their work by the availability of Duke's own scores and parts at the Smithsonian. Tony's DERO library of transcriptions is now in the care of DESUK. Duke's music is heard in concert halls, theatres and churches as well as in jazz clubs. It is in the repertoire of ballet companies, and several Ellington repertory orchestras are active. Many singers keep his songs alive.

Duke died forty years ago, but on record, in books, in *academe* and in performance, interest in his legacy is as high as ever, and our understanding of it continues to grow.

¹Billy was the subject of a fine 1996 biography, David Hajdu's *Lush Life*, and Walter van de Leur's *Something To Live For* (2002) is a detailed, authoritative study of his music. The '*petit-maitre*' tag re-emerged in Terry Teachout's recent biography, leading to an unwelcome revival in *Jazz Journal* of the nonsensical phrase 'three-minute form'.

On Record

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BEN WEBSTER THE WARM MOODS + BBB & CO

[The Warm Moods]: (A) *The Sweetheart Of Sigma Chi; Stella By Starlight*; (B) *With Every Breath I Take; Accent On Youth; But Beautiful*; (A) *Time After Time; Nancy With The Laughing Face; I'm Beginning To See The Light*; (B) *It Was So Beautiful*; (A) *The Whiffenpoof Song*; (B) *It's Easy To Remember*; (A) *There's No You*.
[BBB & Co]: (C) *Opening Blues; Lula; When Lights Are Low**; *You Can't Tell The Difference When The Sun Goes Down Blues***

****listed on Prestige MPP2513 as Heavy Hearted Blues**

Ben Webster (ts) with: (A) Gene Di Novi (p, cel), Don Bagley (b), Frank Capp (d); plus cello quartet arr. & cond. Johnny Richards – Edgar Lustgarten, Armand Kaproff, Raphael Kramer, Victor Gottlieb. (B) as (A), but Don Trenner (p, cel) replaces Di Novi; cellos replaced by string quartet: Alfred Lustgarten, Lisa Minghetti (vn), Cecil Figelski (va) and Armand Kaproff (cello). (71:05)

(Note: strings personnels per Tom Lord Discography Version 12.0. CD notes have them reversed).

LA, 18(A) and 19(B) January, 1961.

With (C) Shorty Sherock (tp), Benny Carter (as, tp*), Ben Webster (ts), Barney Bigard (cl), Jimmy Rowles (p), Dave Barbour (g), Leroy Vinnegar (b), Mel Lewis (d).

Englewood Cliffs NJ, 10 April 1962

Original sessions produced by Nat Hentoff (A) and (B); Leonard Feather (C).

American Jazz Classics 99085

What you have here is a straight reissue of two disparate LPs, completely unconnected except that the link is Ben Webster. Both are reissued in their entirety, in other words no extra tracks because I don't think there are any or they would have surfaced by now. Before I come to the music, this is a superb reissue and comes with excellent sleeve notes (apart from the personnel reversal mentioned above) with an interview of Ben Webster speaking to Les Tompkins in 1965 and the original liner notes of both albums by Nat Hentoff and Leonard Feather respectively. Sound quality is also excellent.

Now to deal with the music: For reasons that are obvious I have to treat each album as a separate entity. First, *Warm Moods*: This is a reissue of the Reprise album and I have never owned it and am hearing the music here for the first time (perhaps because when it was first issued in 1962 it cost 37s 6d, or £1.88 in new money, or forty five quid or so in today's terms. Put it another way, the best part of 20 pints of beer – guess what won!)

However, this is Ben Webster doing what he does best; lovely ballads, immaculately played. He can even make breath sound musical and sexy. However, there is one difficulty – a string quartet (this one reads like the Polish half back line). I always think that strings and jazz just don't mix, they can be cloying, saccharine or just get in the way. I never liked Billie's *Lady In Satin* or Charlie Parker with strings. Here, the arrangements by Johnny Richards may not be cloying or saccharine, but they sure get in the way. Having said this, don't necessarily be put off by the string accompaniment; if anything it is marginally better and less sickly than the Webster with strings on the Clef/Verve label. Ben plays twelve ballads, the longest track being less than three and a half minutes and, not surprisingly, on the less well known or unexpected tunes (*Whiffenpoof Song* for example) Ben makes them sound better than even the composer probably intended. Some may class this as "easy listening" and I would not blame them; but since when has Ben Webster been "easy listening"? Make no mistake, this is jazz tenor saxophone, that most expressive of instruments that epitomises jazz like no other, played at its very best.

Now *BBB & Co*: I have owned this album on LP from the mid-sixties when it was reissued on the Xtra label, a cheapo reissue of the original Prestige Swingville (fewer pints of beer). I must confess that I had not listened to it for many a year – my loss, so this is another welcomed reissue. Originally issued under Benny Carter's name as leader it reunites Ben Webster with fellow Ellingtonian Barney Bigard for the first time on record since 1942.

With only four tracks all the musicians are given many opportunities to solo on this freewheeling album. The tracks are of a blues or similar tempo with a slow, extended blues to wind up the session. It is superb from start to finish and although only four tracks this is more than just a blowing session with the musicians being given plenty of scope in which to express and extend themselves. Carter probably comes out on top, but this is not a contest. Ben takes excellent solos on *When Lights Are Low* (also featuring Benny on a short trumpet solo). He plays a hard hitting, dirty, solo on *Opening Blues* and an incredibly beautiful solo, as only he can, on *Sun Goes Down*. Let us not forget Barney Bigard who is also heard throughout reminding us of his Ellington days on *Lula* and again on *Sun Goes Down Blues*. The rhythm section of Rowles, Barbour, Vinnegar and Lewis are just perfect for the session, binding the whole thing together and both Rowles and Barbour contribute with apposite solos when necessary.

All in all, this is a welcome reissue of two contrasting albums, and if one, or both, are not already on your shelf, don't hold back – you will not regret it.

Grant Elliot

HAROLD ASHBY QUARTET

Candy; Quickie; There Is No Greater Love; Dainty; Over The Rainbow; Pleading; Days Of Wine And Roses; Couscous. Alt. takes: *There Is No Greater Love; Days Of Wine And Roses; Pleading; Dainty* (54:30)

Harold Ashby (ts); Don Friedman (p); George Mraz (b); Ronnie Bedford (d). NYC, 7 August, 1978

Progressive PCD 7040

Brought in as a temporary replacement in the Ellington orchestra of the late 1950s, Harold Ashby stood in at times for Paul Gonsalves and Jimmy Hamilton. But it was not until the performance at the 1968 Newport Jazz Festival that he became a full-time member and stayed until shortly after Duke's death in 1974. But his role had also been to replace Ben Webster, whose distinctive breathily husky tenor had been an important element in the Ellington mix through the 40s and the Ashby sound shared some of these characteristics.

As heard on this lovely quartet programme, though, recorded when the man was 53, his trademark buzz was subtler. Here he exhibits the perfect middle-of-the-road quartet approach, outlining his themes with tender respect and going on to decorate them elegantly and without histrionics. So within the parameters of this modest but affecting style there is much beauty and much understated swing. Pianist Don Friedman – and note his unobtrusive backing runs on *No Greater Love* – was the ideal, sympathetic sideman, staying well within the pre-mod groove. His intro on the brisk blues *Dainty* launches Ashby into some nicely detailed storytelling while the Mraz bass walks boldly and steadily and Bedford's drum and cymbal work has exactly the right degree of restraint.

So there is no genre-busting bravado on display here, but lots of delicacy and creativity. It makes you believe that the swing ethos will never truly die and it leaves you with a warm glow.

Anthony Troon

CLARK TERRY FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS: LEADER AND SIDEMAN

CD1 [Introducing Clark Terry]: (1) *Swahili; Double Play; Slow Boat; Co-op; Kitten; The Countess; Tuma; Chuckles.* [One Foot In The Gutter]: (2) *One Foot In The Gutter; Well You Needn't; Sandu* (79:59)

CD2 [In Orbit]: (3) *In Orbit; One Foot In The Gutter; Trust In Me; Let's Cool One; Pea-Eye; Argentia; Moonlight Fiesta; Buck's Business; Very Near Blue.* [It's About Time]: (4) *Two For One; Mr Good Blues; Peanut Head; Stupid But Not Crazy; Nits And Wits; Gone With The Blues* (79:35)

Clark Terry (tp, flh) with: (1) Jimmy Cleveland (tb), Cecil Payne (bs), Horace Silver (p), Oscar Pettiford (cello, b), Wendell Marshall (b), Art Blakey (d). Quincy Jones (arr.) NYC, 4 January 1955. (2) Curtis Fuller

(tb), Junior Cook (ts), Horace Parlan (p), Peck Morrison (b), Dave Bailey (d). NYC, 19 and 20 July 1960. (3) Thelonious Monk (p), Sam Jones (b), Philly Joe Jones (d). NYC 7 and 12 May 1958. (4) Britt Woodman (tb), Jimmy Hamilton (cl, ts), Tommy Flanagan (p), Marshall (b), Mel Lewis (d). NYC 21 March 1961

Avid AMSC 1102

The most welcome of the four albums here is the first, which was Terry's debut as a leader on record. It's a delight throughout, has only previously been available on CD as an expensive import (under the alternative title of *Swahili*) and is alone worth the price of the whole package. Planned by Terry and Quincy Jones it offers a nicely varied programme of originals with exceptional work from Blakey on the opening track where Terry is at his most Gillespie-like. He's more his distinctive self thereafter and while all the solos are good I particularly enjoyed those of the well featured Pettiford, on cello as well as bass. The following three tracks, lasting around 10, 11 and 20 minutes respectively, suffer in the imposed comparison. Conceived by leader Dave Bailey as strings of long solos with minimal ensemble work, they find Terry and Cook just about holding their own but Fuller struggling to sustain interest. Part of the problem here is the similarity of the tempos, all between slow and medium.

We move from the obscure to the famous as the second CD opens with the well-known Terry-led quartet in which Monk made a rare recording as a sideman. Full of interest, this finds the light-hearted Terry and the serious Monk producing a unique and beguiling partnership with excellent support from Sam Jones and from Philly Joe who was obviously enjoying himself in a rather special situation. More ordinary are the final six tracks, consisting of six originals by leader Jimmy Hamilton. More ordinary but certainly not negligible as all the front line respond well to the support of Flanagan, Marshall and Lewis and the pianist's solos keep the quality level high, alongside three robust contributions from the leader's tenor. There's also a chance to hear Woodman making good use of a plunger mute, something he never used with Ellington.

Graham Colomé

EDDIE DANIELS & ROGER KELLAWAY DUKE AT THE ROADHOUSE

*I'm Beginning To See The Light; Creole Love Call; Perdido¹; Duke At The Roadhouse; In A Mellow Tone^{*1}; In A Sentimental Mood¹; Sophisticated Lady^{*}; Duke In Okai¹; Mood Indigo¹; It Don't Mean A Thing.* (56:30)

Eddie Daniels (cl, ^{*}ts); Roger Kellaway (p); ¹add James Holland (cello).

Santa Fé, New Mexico. 12 & 14 October 2012

IPOC 1024

To play a programme of big-band music with two or three instruments shows ambitious determination and to bring it off shows talent as well. The virtuosity of Daniels is never in doubt and the eclectic Kellaway ranges from delicacy to

rumbustiousness. On five tracks the cello is a welcome addition and although that instrument's parts and solos were all written out by Kellaway they are played by James Holland with a committed romanticism.

That suggests of course that there's nothing far out here and rhythmically and harmonically that is indeed the case. Nevertheless the leaders bring a witty ingenuity to this music which is typified by their beginning *It Don't Mean A Thing* in 3/4 time before moving to a climactic up-tempo 4/4. In the opener the Daniels clarinet, much closer to Hamilton than to Bigard or Procope, may seem rather too detached but his more involved playing in *Creole Love Call* soon modifies that impression. The two tracks where he's on tenor provide variety and the cello and tenor blend particularly well on *Mellow Tone*.

Each of the co-leaders contributed a pleasant enough original and *Duke At The Roadhouse*, written by Daniels, recalls a venue where he jammed with Ellington in 1966. Almost half a century later this tribute is the best possible kind. It presents very well-known standards from the Ducal repertoire in a fresh and lively manner, illustrating the potential still embedded within them.

Graham Colomé

RAPHAËL IMBERT PROJECT HEAVENS. AMADEUS & THE DUKE

Dancers In Love; Such Sweet Thunder; Clarinet Quintet K 581; Das Lied Der Trennung K 519; Ethiopik 23; My Love; Les Dissonances K 465; Introduction/Heaven; Zwei Geharnischte Männer; Black And Tan Fantasy; A Cenar Teco; Praise God; Man Came To Jesus; Happy Go Lucky Local/The Beautiful American; New World A-Comin'; Come Sunday; Die Himmlischen; Ave Verum Corpus K 618 (61:20) (*Allegretto)*

Imbert (s, bcl, p) with (collective personnel): Marion Rampal (vcl); Thomas Weirich (gs); Simon Sieger (tb, p org); André Rossi (p); Pierre Fénichel (b); Jean-Luc Difràya (d, vcl); Vussa Vequi (d); Florent Héau (cl); Quatuor Manfred – Marie Béreau, Luigi Vecchioni (vn, Emmanuel Haratyk (vla), Christian Woolff (cello). Saint-Auban, 27 Feb and 2 Mar 2012.

Jazz Village JV 570011

There may be some readers who feel that an exclamation mark, rather than a full stop, should have followed the first part of the title of this latest project from French saxophonist Imbert. Born in 1974 in Thiais, a southern suburb of Paris, today Imbert has a considerable reputation as a wide-ranging post-Coltrane improviser and composer involved in the sacred dimensions of jazz and classical music, who has published many articles in this field. Self-taught, here he shows fine control throughout, spicing his historical awareness and fundamental lyricism with occasional free touches.

An interest in the spiritual import of Freemasonry – which, according to Imbert, links Ellington to Mozart – informs this variegated follow-up to the Bach-Coltrane album which was re-released in 2012 as part of Imbert's three-CD Projects set on Zig-Zag ZZT 323. Extensive French/English liner notes underline the musical depths of

the Heavens project, as rhythmically diverse as it is chromatically nuanced, and a glance at the titles confirms the ambition of the enterprise. If, initially, I found the results both thoughtful and provocative, yet somehow academic in overall effect, I have come more and more to enjoy the lucid manner in which the diversely employed vocalist, jazz group and string quartet refigure the spaces between e.g., Mozart's *Clarinet Quintet* and Ellington's *Come Sunday*.

Like Imbert, Rampal and Rossi in particular perform excellently throughout (hear Rampal on the spiritual *Man Came To Jesus* or Rossi's brief solo rendition of *New World...*) and there is also some 'time travelling' electronic sound treatment on Imbert's own *Himmlischen*. Like the Bach-Coltrane set, *Heavens* should be heard by anyone interested in the contemporary development of what, all those years ago, Gunther Schuller called 'Third Stream' music.

Michael Tucker

HARRY CARNEY AND THE DUKE'S MEN ROCK ME GENTLY HAROLD ASHBY/PAUL GONSALVES TWO FROM DUKE

Titles and collective personnel (HC):

Tree Of Hope; Blues For Blokes; Baby Blue; Jeepers Creepers; Rock Me Gently; Hand Me Down Love; Mabulala; Five O' Clock Drag

Willie Cook, Ed Mullens, Ray Nance, Andrew "Fats" Ford (tp); Mitchell "Booty" Wood (tb); Paul Gonsalves (ts); Harry Carney (bs); Rollins Griffith (p), Aaron Bell (b), Sam Woodyard (d).

Boston, 16 and 17 September 1960.

Personnel (HA/PG):

Don't Get Around Much Anymore; The Midnight Sun Will Never Set; Jeeps Blues; Backstairs; Oh Shucks; Out Of Nowhere; My Buddy; Swallowing The Blues Ray Nance (tp), Harold Ashby (ts), Paul Gonsalves (ts/g), Jimmy Jones or Sir Charles Thompson (p), Al Hall or Aaron Bell(b), Oliver Jackson or Jo Jones (d) NYC, 9 October 1959, 27 February 1960, 8 October 1960, 5 January 1961

Vocalion CDSML 8489

Unlike his contemporary big band leaders in the 1930s and 1940s, Duke Ellington did not feature a 'band within a band'. Of course Ellington enthusiasts, whilst generally accepting this premise, will be quick to point out that this discrepancy was more than compensated for by the scores of small group recordings of the period which Ellington and his musicians made from the middle 30's onwards. Certainly from these years all the leading Ellington men, including Harry Carney, took part in these recordings. Despite the Duke being featured on these studio dates, his name was not used as leader of these groups. Thus the nominal 'head' was shared between the various participants – Rex Stewart, Barney Bigard, Cootie Williams etc.

Despite his involvement in these, and a few other non-directly Ellington related recording dates, it wasn't until 1954 that Carney was given the status of leader. This was as a Harry Carney with strings session for Verve. It was to be a further six years before he was afforded the kudos again.

This is the recording which forms the first eight tracks on this CD.

The concept of the session was the idea of British record producer, Dennis Preston, who turned up in America with eight arrangements by Kenny Graham. Of these tunes, four were compositions of Graham, two by Duke Ellington, one jazz standard whilst the remaining title, *Baby Blue*, was by Stan Tracey. There was a suggestion that this session was to be the first of a number of similar productions but this appears to be the only effort which reached fruition.

According to Stanley Dance who supervised the two-day recording session, the musicians were surprised and intrigued by the arrangements, so much so that Stanley was frequently obliged to explain who Kenny Graham was and his musical credentials in Britain. In addition to Dance, Tom Whaley came to conduct and contribute parts.

It may be the emphasis on 'the management team' (perhaps a question of 'too many cooks') which contributes to what I feel on *Jeepers, Five o' Clock* and *Mabulala* is an unease which is communicated in their performance. On the plus side tracks *Baby Blue* and *Tree Of Hope* are of outstanding quality, with the latter generating a particularly mellow sound. As leader, Harry Carney acquits himself very well and this is a good opportunity to hear his baritone in the less constricted combination of a small group with no formal time and scoring disciplines. Paul Gonsalves' playing on *Baby Blue* is particularly rewarding.

Rollins Griffith is not a name that appears with regularity throughout discographical works. I believe this to be his only studio date, his other recorded work being limited to a private recording with Serge Chaloff and air shots with Charlie Parker – all recorded in Boston. His contribution to this Carney date I believe is best described as competent and adequate without at any time creating an overwhelming presence on the recording. Subsequently Griffith went on to be a leading figure within music education in Boston.

Throughout his working life, Harry Carney was very committed to Duke Ellington - a role which he fulfilled with great loyalty, application and success; this to a degree which perhaps hid something of his own musical potential and character. These tracks give us a chance to appraise his contribution to jazz in a more personal way.

Harold Ashby's recordings with Duke Ellington on a regular basis commenced when he replaced Jimmy Hamilton in the autumn of 1968. However he was no stranger to the stalwarts of the Ellington organisation, first encountering Hodges, Carney, Terry and others on a recording date for Mercer Ellington called *The Colors Of Rhythm*. This dates from 1959 when later that year he was to appear with Mercer's big band at Birdland.

The four recording dates which comprise the Ashby part of this CD were Stanley Dance supervised sessions from roughly the same period 1959-61.

In his style of playing, Ashby attributes the influence of Ben Webster and this facet may be discerned throughout the four sessions. Notwithstanding the Webster influence, Ashby demonstrates other more modern influences. He contributes excellent solos on *The Midnight Sun* (Quincy Jones), *My Buddy* (dedicated to Ben Webster) with good support from pianist Jones. On tracks 9, 12, 13, 15, Al Hall's bass playing is unobtrusive and maintains an excellent foundation for Harold Ashby's playing, with a

splendid contribution also from Oliver Jones, at this time beginning to establish himself on the scene.

The long and sole selection from the January 1961 date pairs Ashby with Paul Gonsalves. The contribution from each of the tenor players can easily be distinguished. Very unusually for an Ellingtonian oriented music collection is a rare example of Gonsalves playing guitar in addition to his role on tenor. This input is interesting rather than earth shattering: an oddity perhaps but allowing once again Sir Charles Thompson to demonstrate why his exemplary supportive and solo work sustained many mainstream recording sessions.

In his review of *Everybody Knows Johnny Hodges* – Impulse GRD-116 (*BL* 20/4 p17) Roger Boyes closed his review by suggesting "Not an indispensable CD maybe – but there's lots of lovely music here". Roger's conclusion fits the bill here admirably.

NB. Readers should note that Tracks 1 – 8 and 10 -11; 14 -16; also appear on 2CD set *The Great Ellingtonians* (Fresh Sound FSR-CD 532) to be reviewed later.

Mike Coates

TWO PHOENIX REISSUES OF LONE HILL CDs DUKE SMALL BANDS WITH GONSALVES AND TERRY

RETROSPECTION: THE PIANO SESSIONS

Phoenix 131584 replicates under the same title, *4tet/5tet/6tet/7tet: Featuring Paul Gonsalves and Clark Terry*, the Lone Hill Jazz CD of small-band stockpile recordings from 1956-58 which appeared in 2009 and was reviewed in *BL* 18/2. As I wrote then, the inlay note stating that these are Duke's only small-group recordings from the 1950s is wrong; the session details themselves are accurate. The music is fine, so if you missed the earlier issue, now's your second chance. And if you have that issue and 24-bit remastering is important to you, you can replace it with this one.

Phoenix 131594 does the same for Lone Hill's CD which collected the 1953 Capitol piano trios and the less well-known but superior 1957 ones for Columbia, together with Duke's performance of *New World A'Comin'* performed at Château Goutelas in 1966, and a curiosity from 1947, a *Mood Indigo* from an appearance on Nat 'King' Cole's radio show. Our review in *BL* 17/1 omitted *All Too Soon* from the titles list of the Capitols, so a very belated ex-Editor's apology for that. Barry Witherden's review of the Phoenix in last December's *JJ* was more enthusiastic than Graham Colombé's of the Lone Hill in *BL*.

THREE REPRISE ALBUMS ON WARNER

Warner has recently been reissuing a lot of the jazz in its care on a series known as the ¥1000 collection (notes are in Japanese, and reproduced original text in English requires a magnifying glass, I gather). Three of Duke's LPs for Reprise are in the series: *Afro-Bossa* Warner 8122797123, *Concert In The Virgin Islands* Warner 8122796845, and *Ellington '66* Warner 8122796844. These are straight reissues of the content of the original 1960s LPs with nothing extra. They've reappeared before on CD, the first two several times, but if you've missed any of them in the past here's another chance. **Roger Boyes**

Hi Fi Fo Fum by Brian Koller

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA LAST TRIP TO PARIS



Kinda Dukish/Rockin' In Rhythm; Creole Love Call; Spacemen; Caravan; How High The Moon; New York, New York; I Got It Bad; Blem; Chinoiserie; Basin Street Blues/Hello, Dolly; Medley: Don't Get Around Much Anymore/Mood Indigo/I'm Beginning To See The Light/Sophisticated Lady; In Triplicate; Love You Madly; One More Time For The People; Woods; Somebody Cares; Take The "A" Train; Take The "A" Train; Lotus Blossom

Mercer Ellington(t); Harold "Money" Johnson(t,v); Barry Lee Hall, Johnny Coles(t,flh); Vincente Prudente, Art Baron(tb); Chuck Connors(btb); Russell Procope(cl,as); Harold Minerve(cl,as,fl,pic); Harold Ashby(ts,cl); Paul Gonsalves, Percy Marion(ts); Harry Carney(cl,bcl,as,bar); Duke Ellington(p); Joe Benjamin(sb); Quentin White(d); Anita Moore, Tony Watkins(v)

Concert, Palais Des Sports, 14 November 1973

Squatty Roo Records SR-0197

This concert at the Palais des Sports, Paris was filmed by a French television crew with voiceovers dubbed between the titles during post-production. The voiceovers often extend into the music. One can see the first half of the original film at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9nDnbOraNIE>

The present CD omits most of the admittedly annoying voiceovers and thus also removes portions of many titles. *Rockin' In Rhythm* and *Sophisticated Lady* are the most affected by the voiceover edits.

Hello, Dolly! is unlisted on the cursory liner notes but is nonetheless present on the second half of track 10.

All tracks are previously unissued on LP, CD or DVD. The track listing differs from standard discographies for the 14 November concert. *Perdido* and *Things Ain't What They Used To Be* are listed in discographies but absent on the present CD. On the other hand, *In Triplicate*, *Love You Madly*, and *One More Time For The People* are included on this CD but are unlisted in discographies. The most likely explanation is that the discographies are incorrect.

Two celebrity guest pianists, Raymond Fol and Claude Bolling respectively, substitute for Ellington on tracks 17 and 18. Ellington also calls for Strayhorn confidant Aaron Bridges to emerge from the audience but his plea is unsuccessful.

As on the recent Squatty Roo CD reissue of the *Opens the Cave* LPs, the engineer has amplified the sound,

increasing distortion and reducing the differences between quiet and loud portions of the performances.

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA LIVE AT CABARET L'ALCAZAR

Kinda Dukish/Rockin' In Rhythm (both titles incomplete); *Take The "A" Train*; *Satin Doll*; *Things Ain't What They Used To Be*; *Sophisticated Lady*; *Satin Doll (Finger Snap Routine)*; *Happy Birthday To You*; *Fife*; *In A Sentimental Mood*; *B.P. Blues*; *Diminuendo In Blue/Wailing Interval*; *Satin Doll* (theme)

Cootie Williams, Cat Anderson, Mercer Ellington(t); Rolf Ericson(t,flh); Lawrence Brown, Aake Persson(tb); Chuck Connors(btb); Russell Procope(cl,as); Norris Turney(fl,cl,as,ts); Johnny Hodges(as); Harold Ashby(ts,cl); Paul Gonsalves(ts); Harry Carney(cl,bcl,as,bar); Duke Ellington(p); Wild Bill Davis(o); Victor Gaskin(sb); Rufus Jones(d); Tony Watkins(v)

Concert, L'Alcazar, 20 November, 1969

Squatty Roo Records SR-1200

This CD contains 14 of the 18 titles from a concert by Duke Ellington and his Orchestra at L'Alcazar in Paris, France. The source for the 13 titles is the black and white video documentary *Les 70 Ans du Duke*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JK4h0KNBAKQ>. The end of the piano solo *Kinda Dukish* is absent, as are the opening bars of *Rockin' In Rhythm*.

The titles *Things Ain't What They Used To Be*, *Sophisticated Lady*, *In A Sentimental Mood*, and *B.P. Blues* have been released previously in superior sound on the readily available CD *Things Ain't What They Used To Be* (LaserLight 17 097) which in turn is a reissue of the rare CD Sarpe Top Jazz SJ-1024.

As is the case with previous Squatty Roo releases (*Last Trip To Paris* and *Live at the Cave*), the engineer has greatly amplified the sound, reducing the differences between quiet and loud portions of the performances. There is little distortion, but the sound is "washy," which sometimes occurs when digital audio has been converted from one format to another.

IB adds:

Perhaps the last word on these 'Squatty Roo' releases should go to the reviewer on Amazon US who wrote, of the release *Last Trip To Paris*:

I happen to be on this album as I played with Duke. Obviously recorded by someone sitting in the audience with a small tape recorder and of course none of the musicians on it getting paid for it. The sound is horrible, pieces of compositions are missing, etc., etc.... I didn't listen to all of it because I know, since I was there, that the band sounded good. Pirating live music is a common practice and has been going on for years and that is exactly what this is.

Thank you,

Vince Prudente

PERFORMANCE

Such Sweet Thunder

Guildhall Jazz Band, director Martin Hathaway

Michael Kilpatrick, transcriptions and baritone saxophone

Guildhall School of Music and Drama Concert Hall, May 3 2014

This year's DESUK Jazz Party with Martin Hathaway's Guildhall Jazz Band (termed "Ellington Project 2014" by the college) was a little different from previous years in that the scores were provided by DESUK member Michael Kilpatrick, who was also present at rehearsals. The main feature was Michael's full transcription of the Shakespearean Suite, *Such Sweet Thunder*, so we celebrated Shakespeare's 450th birthday as well as Ellington's 115th.

Such Sweet Thunder is arguably the very best of the Duke Ellington/Billy Strayhorn suites and it drew a good turnout of DESUK members to the Guildhall, considerably swelling the Jazz Band's usual crowd of parents and friends. Michael Kilpatrick introduced the 12 movements with informative comments, and the excellent current crop of Guildhall students played the marvellous music superbly.

David Berger said at the Ellington 2014 conference in Amsterdam that the Ellington repertoire "takes a lot of hard work in ways you don't usually get in jazz," and the experience for the students of playing music such as the title piece, Ellington's *Madness In Great Ones* or Strayhorn's beautiful *The Star-Crossed Lovers* (with Helena Kay in the Hodges/Juliet role) must be invaluable. *Such Sweet Thunder* will no doubt be played a fair bit over the next year or so given the Shakespeare anniversaries this year and in 2016 – Michael's own band, *Harmony In Harlem*, played the suite on March 22 in Halesworth, Suffolk – and that is very welcome.

Earlier, the band had opened with the 1945 version of *In A Sentimental Mood* and Juan Tizol's *Bakiff* (with the excellent Johanna Bernard on violin) before featuring Michael Kilpatrick in his saxophonist role-playing the Harry Carney feature *Serious Serenade* from the band's mid-1950s Capitol period. This was a real treat, with Michael's huge sound on his vintage, silver Conn baritone filling the hall, cushioned by the well-rehearsed Guildhall Jazz Band.

For an encore after *Such Sweet Thunder*, the band swung out on *Take The 'A' Train*, leaving a happy, smiling band and band director, and a very satisfied audience.

Personnel:

Michael Mason, James Mayhew, Ewan Gilchrist, Katie Smith (tpt)

Ed Parr, Vuay Prakash, John Caddick (tbn)

Helena Kay, Will Paley, Alex Western-King, Jacob Burgess, Rachel Kerry (reeds)

Johanna Bernard (vln)

Lyle Barton (pno), Matt Gedrych (bass), Arthur Newell (dms)

Quentin Bryar

Norwich Jazz Party

Dunston Hall Hotel, Norwich

Saturday to Monday 3-5 May 2014

This eighth Norwich Jazz Party was held in a new venue, just south of the city on the Ipswich road. Dunston Hall is a rambling Victorian pile with later extensions and a strong line in golf and fancy weddings. It's more elegant than the old place and its surroundings are much finer. There were teething troubles and glitches, and the music room is not as good as the excellent suite at the Holiday Inn, but all went more or less well, and the same venue is already booked for the same Bank Holiday weekend in 2015, 2-4 May. While nothing excited me at the level of last year's Mingus set, the music was well varied and never less than first-class, though I missed the presence of a dedicated singer or cabaret act. It was more difficult than ever to decide which sets to walk away from, as I must once in a while.

There was no Ellington set this year. There should have been one led by Jim Galloway for Hodges, but illness forced Jim to pull out at the last minute. That said, the weekend's very first set, a septet led by Enrico Tomasso, opened with *Ring Dem Bells* and continued with *The Jeep Is Jumpin'* and *Things Ain't...*, curiously introduced as *Time's A'Wastin'*, the 1945 title under which it was briefly known.

Later in the afternoon some delightful cornet-piano duets by Jon-Erik Kellso and Ehud Asherie included *Black Beauty* and a Kenny-Davern Bob Wellstood take on *Jubilee Stomp, Fast As A Bastard*. A midnight three trombones set included *I Didn't Know About You*, and earlier in the evening session one of this year's new faces, bassist Kristin Korb, sang *'A' Train*. A fine bassist, Kristin is also a creative singer for whom lyrics are important, so it was a shame that a rare lapse in the sound balance made it hard to follow her words.

Sunday was Ellington-free apart from a reference to Herb Jeffries' *Flamingo* in another Kristin Korb set, with Ken Peplowski and Jacob Fischer. Monday lunchtime brought a fine *Isfahan* in a Howard Alden-Dan Barrett-Alan Barnes set in which Dan, sporting a splendid flamingo tie, echoed Billy's scoring in his counter-melody. *Mood Indigo* cropped up in a Jon-Erik Kellso-Scott Robinson set with Fischer, Asherie and Alec Dankworth, and Enrico and John Pearce played a waltz-time take on *I Got It Bad...* In the evening Houston Person selected *Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me*, and the last set of all, Alan's *Sax Until The End*, included *Chelsea Bridge* and a brisk *Ko Ko*.

Norwich is a musical marathon with many rewards, and Norwich 2014 was no exception.

Roger Boyes

NEXT ISSUE

DUKE ELLINGTON
 **IN GRÖNA LUND**

Members will read in this edition about all the interesting events which took place at the Amsterdam conference. My contribution will be to report what happened at the very beginning and at the end of the three and a half days of presentations and music. Think of these as the "bread" parts of the delicious sandwich we enjoyed over that long weekend.

The Eddie Lambert memorial gavel, last used at Woking in 2012, made it to Amsterdam but not without incident. Delia and I flew from Manchester and decided that KLM's generous hand luggage allowance meant that we didn't have to "check" any cases to be collected upon arrival. However, the security inspection of our coats and carry-on bags revealed that I was attempting to smuggle a weapon on board! "It looks like a hammer, Sir. Please open your bag and carefully take it out". The silk-lined, leather-bound presentation box was opened in the presence of a supervisor who, after reading the inscription on the brass plate attached to the wooden gavel, agreed that the conference could not be declared open until the gavel was brought down on the matching wooden base. At the Amsterdam Conservatorium 24 hours later, Louis Tavecchio was able to do just that.

The DESUK 2014 AGM, as reported in BL 21/1, was to be the first in our history to be held outside the UK. It was planned in meticulous detail, with all the agendas and related reports placed on the desks of a 4th floor classroom within the Conservatorium. We started promptly at 9.30am on the Sunday, undaunted by the lights cutting out because the brilliant sunshine filled the south-facing room. However at around 9.40am we were informed that all occupants of the building had to gather on the ground floor. Because the power cut had affected the whole building we had to walk down (no lifts being operative) and annexed an unoccupied section of the student refectory where we continued with our AGM agenda. At around 10.00am the order came, on safety grounds, for everyone to vacate the building. Apparently the power cut had affected a very wide area, with the adjacent library, hotels and shops all inoperative. Ever resourceful, we continued with the third and concluding part of the AGM while standing on the river bank in the warm sunshine. As to the content of the meeting, there is precious little to report because every decision was unanimous! Your committee was re-elected en bloc, something which will not happen at our 2015 AGM (Pizza Express as in 2013, anyone?) because several officers gave notice that they would serve for just one more year before standing down. More about this in a future Chairman's Chat.

At Your Beck And Call (Cotton Club. 1st May 1938. Vocal, Ivie)

Peter Caswell

In general, we announce live performances by bands with DESUK connections, and/or a repertoire with an Ellington element. Not all performances listed here will be strongly Ellingtonian. Ed.

28th June, 7.30 pm *Swinging at the Cotton Club*. The dance and music of The Cotton Club is recreated by the Jiving Lindy Hoppers, the world's premier jazz dance company and Harry Strutters Hot Rhythm Orchestra, featuring vocalist Marlene Hill and compere/ vocalist Megs Etherington. The Cadogan Hall, Sloane Terrace, London SW1 Box Office 020 7730 4500 www.cadoganhall.com

Kinda Dukish:

Thursdays, 8.30pm, British Oak,
Pershore Rd., Stirchley, B'ham B30 2XS
Contact Mike Fletcher on
0121 444 4129

Frank Griffith

19 June, 8.30pm Frank Griffith Quartet with Tina May, Robin Aspland, Mick Hutton and Bobby Worth. Bulls Head in Barnes, 373 Lonsdale Road, Barnes, SW13 9PY. 0208 876 5241. £10. www.thebullshead.com

5 July, 2.30pm FG with Tina May and the Divas album launch. Septet including John Pearce, Karen Sharp, Adrian Fry, Fred Gavita, Andrew Cleyendert and Bobby Worth. The Stables Garden Season, Wavendon. MK17 8LU. 01908 280800. £10. www.stables.org

16 July, 7.30pm FG as special guest with the Swing Unlimited Big Band, Riviera Hotel, Alum Chine, Bournemouth, BH4 8JF. 07771 267445. £10. www.swingunlimitedbigband.co.uk

19 July, 8pm FG with *Jazz on a Summer's Day*, Bridport Arts Centre, South Street, Bridport, DT6 3NR. 01308 427183. £14. www.bridport-arts.com

20 July, 11-2pm. Frank Griffith Trio at, the Symondsburys Kitchen, Manor Yard, Mill Lane, Symondsburys, DT6 6HG. 01308 583309. Free.

www.symondsburysstateholidays.co.uk

24 July, 9pm Frank Griffith Nonet at Ealing Jazz Festival. Walpole Park, Ealing Broadway, W5. £3. www.ealingsummerfestivals.co.uk

25 September, 8pm FG Quintet with Freddie Gavita, Bedford Golf Club, Carnoustie Drive, Great Denham, Beds, MK40 4FF. 01234 320022. £10. www.thebedfordgc.com

Ellington at the Temple

As part of the City of London Festival, the rediscovered Masonic Temple at the Andaz Liverpool Street Hotel Liverpool Street, London EC2M 7QN is hosting a jazz festival in June and July where you can "enjoy the best of Ellington in this enchanting hidden venue":

Friday 4th July, 7.00pm and 9.30pm Tommy Smith, saxophone and Brian Kellock, piano; £25

Friday, 11 July, 7.00pm and 9.30pm Julian Joseph, piano; £25

A DRUM IS A WOMAN

A DRUM IS A WOMAN
THE GUILDHALL JAZZ BAND AND
SINGERS DIRECTED BY MARTIN
HATHAWAY

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ALBUM £10 INCLUDING P&P (CASH
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David Schiff (on the live performance) "What a thrill to hear such a great performance of *A Drum Is A Woman*"

David Schiff (on the CD recording) "The performance really sold me on the piece for the first time"

Ron Malings "I have always loved the recording that came out all those years ago. How can anyone close to EKE fail to love the wry humour, the drama, and the sexiness of his narrative?"

"As for this new version, what a band! The sound of the band collectively suggests not just a well-rehearsed bunch of pros but people steeped in Ellingtonia; I can only imagine what work went into the project. The transcriber must have worked his tail off."

"The recording balance was 'unfair' to the singers and narrator. Perhaps Joya's dep needed to cultivate a little archness, but then I fell for Joya many years ago."

"Stand-out performers? The trumpets are super, especially in *New Orleans* and the Cat-like performer in *Zaji's Dream*. As I write this I am playing again the great *Finale*. What a way to go out!"

Jack Kinsey "I absolutely love it. I was in the front row at the concert and this has brought it all back"

Eunice Malloch "This is a wonderful memento of a very happy evening. The concert was great and I got to sit near to Darius Brubeck"

Ian Bradley "The musicians and singers more than rise to the challenge... A bravura performance which captures the nuances and humour of the writing, the modern stereo recording allowing the listener to hear the vivid detail in the charts... The album is bound to be a collector's item" (extracted from Bradley's preview piece in *Blue Light*, Spring 2014)

Michael Coates "It was a major feature of Woking. The musicians did very well on something you don't hear very often. For that reason alone, this piece has to be heard in its complete version and this record now stands in the body of Ellington's work to be considered. Geoff Smith and Antony Pepper are to be congratulated on seeing the work through to its final conception in the form of the CD"



BLUE LIGHTLY ON THE ROAD

Geoff Smith, Managing Editor

Pride of place in my recollections of Amsterdam has to go to the sage utterance of Prof Matthew Cooper, who told me: “*Duke said he was born at Newport 1956. I was born at Woking 2012*”. How about that? I could not have been more pleased. Seriously though, Matt is a huge talent who, through his book, the Woking and now Amsterdam conferences, is making a significant and permanent contribution to Ellington’s music and legacy, past, present, and future. He is a shining star of the music world and he belongs to us.

*

Joint organiser Louis Tavecchio made mention in his conference farewell of his “anonymous sponsor” being pleased with the conference’s success. Few are aware of the sponsor’s identity, although he had attended the 17 May concert. It should be noted that without his reassurances and backing the financial headaches surrounding the conference would have been huge. As it was, the many costly refinements associated with the event which might not have been sanctioned without the awareness of this backing, were greatly appreciated by this writer and many thanks indeed are due to this shy gentleman.

*

What was my friend Antony Pepper up to as he took to the rostrum and twiddled knobs at the end of proceedings on the Sunday? The answer came when the voice of Alyn Shipton filled the Blue Note room, with DESUK member Eddie Little’s request on BBC Radio 3 *Jazz Record Requests* the previous evening to extend greetings to Ellington 2014, Amsterdam. So delegates filed out to the strains of our *A Drum Is A Woman* CD, recorded at Woking. A copy of this is now lodged in the BBC record library, so get your own requests in to the programme to give it some more air-time. Alyn tells me any music/singing/narration segments from it up to five minutes long would be suitable.

*

Before the All Ellington concert in Amsterdam’s Bimhuis centre of culture I confess I had partaken of a tiny drink. So I was a bit late showing up and missed the last call for food. Yet meals were then issued to a foursome who had followed me in. Noting my distress, no less a person than Artistic Director Huub van Riel insisted I join them, ordered up a spare plate and promptly split his own meal and wine 50-50 with me. He had of course noticed my conference name badge, but what hospitality! All I can say now is check out the Bimhuis programme if you are ever in Amsterdam. They have a great all-music policy and the food’s good too.

*

Ken Steiner’s discovery of Duke Ellington and the Washingtonians’ first film made for a top-notch presentation. When *Headlines* was shown for the first time in 88 years someone commented: “Too bad it’s a silent movie.” Ken’s reply “Well, that’s the only kind of movie they had” brought the house down... It was incongruous but extremely gratifying to see Ken’s Ellington 2012 Washingtonians t-shirts being worn by delegates walking to Centraal Station in the sunshine at the end of proceedings. Thanks for everything, Ken.

*

Louis Tavecchio announced to acclaim that next up for our close friends in the Netherlands is to form a Dutch Duke Ellington Society, or “chapter” as he put it. This can only strengthen the Duke ties that bind the UK and Holland. Should we in turn think of binding our societies closer together for performance and other activity? United we would be stronger, possibly?

Conference Jottings

Mercedes Ellington and Duke Ellington Center For The Arts executive director Marilyn Lester jointly announced their intention to organise the 23rd Conference in New York in 2016. See thedukeellingtoncenter.org for details of the centre.

David Schiff’s keynote paper *Southland Revisited* has been acquired from him for *Blue Light*. It will be featured in a future issue.

The 2013 Duke Jazz Festival at Provins, near Paris, (see Laurent Mignard and Claude Carriere) is on 23-27 September. Six of the twelve La Maison du Duke exhibition panels were on display in Amsterdam. It is hoped all twelve will be produced in English. The Mignard Duke Orchestra’s latest CD is *Ellington French Touch* featuring “incomplete” music lodged at the Smithsonian. See maisonduduke.com

The DESUK/Ellington 2012 *A Drum Is A Woman* CD was successfully launched. Less than a third of the total number of copies produced remained available for sale post-conference.

Luca Bragalini’s book *Duke Ellington’s Symphonic Dreams* is due to be published in the autumn in Italian. It will feature his discovery of Duke’s symphonic work *Celebration* and will include a CD. DESUK, through the committee, is hoping to assist with the costs of the book’s translation into English.

Other venues included the Bimhuis music venue for an All Ellington project concert *Braggin’ In Strings* featuring three string players with the All Ellington Tentet founded in 2012 by Eric Boeren (cornet), and the North Sea Jazz Club, Amsterdam, for the specially assembled Conservatorium Concert Big Band performance of *Black, Brown and Beige* and other Ellington numbers arranged, rehearsed, and conducted by David Berger. The conference Banquet was held at the Restaurant de Zouthaven on the waterside.

Items from the conference and concerts were captured by DjazzTV.

An attendance list was published during the conference. An attendance list for Ellington 2012 was also produced (at last) and available at the conference. Email Antony Pepper if you want a copy.

Furthest-flung Amsterdam delegate appears to have been Bill Egan from Aranda, Australia, previously Europe and Dublin-based. Overseas delegates did, of course, travel by train, boat and plane, to attend. DESUK member Mike Winn made the trip from England, via Channel crossing, on his motor-cycle. **GS**

**MINUTES of the DESUK Committee Meeting
1pm on SATURDAY 18th JANUARY 2014 at the
Punch Tavern, 99 Fleet Street, London, EC4Y
1DE**

Present: Peter Caswell (Chair), Quentin Bryar, Catherine Coates, Frank Harvey, Victor Lawrance, Phil Mead, Antony Pepper, Geoff Smith

1. Chairman's opening remarks (PC). The meeting commenced at 1 pm, with the Chairman welcoming members, noting that VL needed to leave early.

2. Apologies for absence: Chris Addison and Ian Bradley had sent apologies.

3. Draft Minutes of committee meeting of 19th October 2013 (already circulated). With two amendments, the Minutes were approved. There were no matters arising.

4. Officers' Reports.

a. Membership Secretary/Treasurer's Reports. (VL). The Membership Report had already been circulated and there were no queries arising. Treasurer reported that subscriptions were coming in at a reasonable pace at present but this could change. By the end of the financial year, he thought that outgoings would exceed income and therefore an increase in the subscription rate ought to be considered as a matter of urgency, noting the rate had been held steady for a number of years. It was agreed that a review of the current subscription rate would be an item on the agenda for the April committee meeting.

b. Blue Light Editor's Report (IB). In IB's absence, GS said that the latest issue of BL had been completed and sent out before Christmas and IB is quietly confident that he has sufficient material for the next edition. On his own behalf GS expressed some concern that contributions from the membership were not being submitted and so this area of connection with the members seemed to be slipping. After discussion, it was agreed that GS would attempt to redress this by urging people, through his column in BL, to send in snippets of interest for inclusion in BL. VL reported he had spoken with David Nathan at National Jazz Archive who had confirmed they had not received certain issues of BL. NJA's subscription had in fact elapsed some 3 years ago. Following discussion, it was agreed that NJA would be sent the "missing" issues by IB and that VL would provide a letter of accompaniment, tactfully requesting NJA pay for these issues and encouraging them to take up their subscription again.

c. Vice Chair (GS). GS suggested that a recording of "A Drum is a Woman" suite by the Guildhall jazz orchestra could be offered for sale in CD format at the AGM and afterwards. The initial cost of producing the CDs for sale would be covered by DESUK but this and

any distribution costs would be covered by sales income. This project and the initial spending was approved by the committee. Otherwise there was nothing of note to report.

d. Publicity (CA). CA's brief report had already been circulated.

e. Meetings Organiser/Website (AP). There was nothing to report on the updating of the Events page on the DESUK website. AP advised that a DESUK meeting featuring the Guildhall band was being organised on a date to be finalised. There was a long discussion around the question of holding the AGM in Amsterdam. It was ultimately agreed that (1) the AGM would be held in Amsterdam as arranged and already agreed by the committee. (2) AP would investigate dates for the London/Guildhall event (which would be open to all DESUK members) and report back to the April committee meeting. (3) A draft Agenda for the AGM should be prepared and circulated in advance to all members to enable them to consider it and make observations or submit items for consideration. PC had spoken with Louis Tavecchio. A bill is not expected for the use of the room for the AGM and since committee members would not be charging for travel expenses, the cost of the meeting to DESUK would be "neutral". We did make a pledge of financial support which may or may not be needed. If it is, the cost of the AGM would be included in this sum.

5. Arrangements for AGM 2014.

1. PC asked if committee members were willing to stand for re-election and all those present confirmed this was so.

2. Reports for the AGM will be needed and should be ready before the April meeting.

3. Fresh Membership Application Forms are now required.

6. A.O.B. GS/AP have been liaising on the CD. These need to be ready for the April meeting so they can be split between the people who are going to Amsterdam. PC advised everyone to check on baggage allowances with their airline. PC reported that Louis Tavecchio seemed keen to involve Vince Prudente in the conference.

7. Dates/Venues of future meetings

Committee: Saturday 5th APRIL 2014 at Punch Tavern confirmed

AGM: 10am-11am Sunday 18th MAY 2014 - Conservatory of Amsterdam confirmed

Committee: Saturday 19th JULY 2014 at Punch Tavern confirmed

The meeting closed at 2.29 pm.

Catherine Coates.

19 January 2014

