



BLUE LIGHT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DUKE ELLINGTON SOCIETY UK
VOLUME 21 NUMBER 4 WINTER 2014/15



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DUKE ELLINGTON SOCIETY UK

<http://dukeellington.org.uk>

HONORARY MEMBERS OF DESUK

Art Baron
Buster Cooper
John Lamb
Vincent Prudente
Monsignor John Sanders
Joe Temperley
Clark Terry

HONORARY MEMBERS SADLY NO LONGER WITH US

Bill Berry (13 October 2002)
Harold Ashby (13 June 2003)
Jimmy Woode (23 April 2005)
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)
Derek Else (16 July 2014)

Membership of Duke Ellington Society UK costs £25 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

Standing Order or Bank Transfer to DESUK at Santander Sort Code 09-01-55 Account number 15478709

PayPal (commission charges are paid by DESUK so you may wish to make a small donation to cover the cost)

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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COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Ian Bradley, Quentin Bryar, Frank Harvey, Phil Mead

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Subsequent to my previous Chairman's Chat (*Blue Light* volume 21/3), appealing for members to consider joining your committee at the 2015 AGM, I have some good news to report. Two members enquired in confidence about the vacancy for Treasurer and one other member has indicated interest in becoming our Membership Secretary. The duties related to both of these posts have been carried out by Victor Lawrance, who will be standing down after 4 years' excellent service to our Society.

Following further discussions over the next few weeks with these three members, I hope to be able to brief the current committee members at our next meeting on Saturday 10th January. I am very hopeful that, from among the new volunteers and current committee members, we will have at least one candidate for each of the posts of Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary. A further update will then be given in this column in *Blue Light* volume 22/1.

In addition we will need "fresh blood" to step forward to fill other vacancies. For example, Phil Mead (who joined the committee when the Count Basie Society was wound up) has already indicated that he will not seek re-election at the 2015 AGM. Older members will remember him as part of Roger Boyes' team which presented Ellington '97 in Leeds.

So, if you are interested in becoming a "Committee Member" (we have four such positions on our committee) feel free to call me, in confidence as ever, to discuss this further. Contact details are, as ever, to be found on page 2.

I like to sign off articles and emails with an appropriate Ellington track but on this occasion I can't better the one I used in BL 21/3:

There'll Be Some Changes Made (June 1957, Carrolltown, PA)

Peter Caswell

TDES

Dates for the 2014-15 TDES (NY) meetings are: Monday 15 December (Christmas concert); then Thursdays, 22 Jan, 19 Feb, 26 Mar, 23 Apr, 28 May, 25 Jun. Time and venues are unchanged at 7.30 pm, St Peter's Church at 54th Street and Lexington Avenue.

BLUE LIGHT

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Editorial

When I began editing *Blue Light* almost two years ago, whilst I was mindful that this was the newsletter of the Duke Ellington Society (UK), my aim has been to ensure that the emphasis in its pages would always be on the 'Duke Ellington' part of the subtitle rather than the 'Society' part.

Our Society receives due attention in this issue for two very important reasons, however. Firstly, 2014 sees the twentieth anniversary of the Society and we could hardly allow this occasion to slip by without commemoration and, indeed, celebration. Our lead article this issue, therefore, is the first of a two-part history, *DESK: the first twenty years* by our Chairman, Peter Caswell. Whilst the usual competition for column issues prevented the possibility of any illustrations accompanying Peter's article, I hope you will find the illustration on our back cover strikes a suitably celebratory note.

Secondly, it's that time of the year again when membership subscriptions are due. It has been necessary to raise the fee for membership for the first time in eight years. In his *Treasurer's Report* on page 21, Victor Lawrance outlines the reasons for this increase and raises some other issues with regard to membership. I commend Victor's piece for your consideration.

Your support has never been needed more to ensure that we are able to continue our work "to celebrate and promote the wider appreciation of the music of Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn."

I hope you enjoy the contents of this issue. On behalf of the committee of DESUK may I wish you all the compliments of the season and a peaceful New Year.

Ian Bradley

DESK : the first twenty years

Part One : 1994 to 2004

By Peter Caswell, Chairman 2006 – 2015

(The editor of *Blue Light*, Ian Bradley, said that he thought I would be the best-placed member to note our first 20 years. I fell for the flattery and belatedly realised that there was no way back! Rather than offering a chronology of committee meetings and AGMs, (which as an enthusiastic committee geek is of supreme interest to me but probably not to any of our readers) I have tried to emphasise the people who made it all possible. Apologies if you don't get a mention. Better luck in 2034! Part two (2004 to 2014) will be published in *Blue Light* 22/1, Spring 2015)

1994

The story begins in the summer of 1994 when an informal gathering of Ellington enthusiasts met at the Bull's Head in Barnes to talk about forming a UK Ellington Society. The result was a "Launch Meeting" in October 1994, held at the Black Horse, Rathbone Place, London W1. The meeting resolved to set up "The Duke Ellington Society of the United Kingdom" with a steering committee to oversee all the administrative arrangements needed to start the ball rolling.

By December 1994 a 24 page *DESK Newsletter* (Volume 1, No 1) was circulated to all who had signed up that October night and those of us who registered immediately afterwards. Edited by Dave Fleming, the standard was set from the start with just 3 pages allocated to DESUK business (including a set of "Rules" which led eventually to a constitution) and the remaining 21 pages dedicated to articles, record reviews, obituaries, discographical analysis and ending with details of the Ellington 1995 Pittsburgh conference to be hosted by the Billy Strayhorn Chapter of TDES.

1995

April saw the arrival of the next *DESK Newsletter* (subtitled, quite properly, as Volume 2, No 1). I can still remember my excitement at reading it cover to cover in one sitting! After 22 pages of reviews, articles and reports on the activities of fellow Ellington Societies and events worldwide we were given, on the inside back cover, full details of the "DESK Inaugural Meeting" to be held at the Black Horse on Sunday 30 April. (Can anyone recall why it could not be held on Duke's birthday?) In addition to the usual AGM-style agenda items there followed "...a recital and discussion on rare Ellington recordings by one of DESUK's most respected patrons, Alun Morgan".

The outside back cover gave a list of the first 150 DESUK members. Here are the first 12 names:

- 1 Vic Bellerby
- 2 John Chilton
- 3 Alan Cohen
- 4 Michael Garrick
- 5 Max Harrison
- 6 Pat Hawes
- 7 Jim Lowe
- 8 Alun Morgan
- 9 Brian Priestley
- 10 Ken Rattenbury
- 11 Stan Tracey
- 12 Steve Voce

I always thought, before rediscovering the above list, that our founder-chairman had been given membership number 1 as it befitted his status. Then it dawned on me that editor David Fleming had listed the first 12 in alphabetical order! David then modestly put himself at number 13. Other significant figures who went on to serve on our early committees were Pete Ford (14), Dennis Dimmer (15), Wendy Heuston (16), Elaine Norsworthy (20), Roger Boyes (34), Derek Else (36), Ray Bolden (120) and Barry Williams (146). A few years later David admitted that he had waggishly allocated me membership number 49 as a nod towards the BBC radio policeman PC49!

DESK Newsletter volume 2, no 2 arrived in July with minutes of the Inaugural AGM (Membership was set at £10 with renewals at £15) and a list of members 151 to 182. The usual content of letters, articles and reviews (including the Mike Westbrook (member no. 151) Orchestra at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in concert *On Duke's Birthday*) was well up to the standards we have come to expect.

October brought us *DESK Newsletter* volume 2, no 3 with the list of new members 183 to 200. Within a year we had reached 200 members (including Humphrey Lyttelton (187) who was subsequently to become our Honorary President), around 20 of whom were from outside the UK. DESUK had arrived and was clearly here to stay!

To cap all this, the first item on the front cover was that Roger Boyes had assembled a committee to present *Ellington '97* in Leeds, the first conference to be held in the UK since Oldham way back in 1985 and 1988.

1996

The very first thing that members would see on receiving the January newsletter (Volume 3, no 1) was the new masthead: *Blue Light* (with the sub-title *the DESUK NEWSLETTER*). This little-known Ellington composition was recorded in New York City on 22nd December 1938. 1996 was also the year that DESUK would publish four quarterly editions, something which has continued every single year to date.

The highlight for me, among the usual array of articles and reviews, was "An open letter from Peter Tchaikovsky (1840-1894) to Duke Ellington (1899-1974)" as imagined by Jim Godbolt. This brilliant essay (in which the composer of *The Nutcracker Suite* congratulates Duke on his 1960 recording) was first published in *Jazz News* in 1961 and re-published in Ronnie Scott's house magazine in 1994. Just one of the ten paragraphs will have to suffice here:

"I notice extensive use of Mr Adolphe Sax's invention which was not much used in my day, and the tone and facility of your players, Mr Harold Carney, Mr Paul Gonsalves and Mr Cornelius Hodges, comes as a refreshing and often startling experience. I also commend the bamboo flute expertise of Mr Russell Procope. The freedom extended to your virtuosi is something their counterparts of my day would perhaps have envied but, I have no illusions, they would not have been capable of such perfectly shaped improvisations and, in any case, the jazz idiom would have utterly confounded them as, I'm sure, it confounds most formal musicians of your time."

Blue Light volume 3 no 2 arrived in April with the front page news that Humphrey Lyttelton had accepted the invitation to be our Honorary President. His name then

appeared on our cover until his death in 2008. Mercer Ellington meanwhile died on 8 February 1996 and editor David Fleming, in his tribute, also pulled together the key points from UK newspapers: *The Independent* (Steve Voce), *The Guardian* (Val Wilmer) and *The Times* (anonymous). On a lighter note, brief congratulations on the content of *Blue Light* came from UK members Alun Morgan (008), Brian Priestley (009), Jack and Thora Hindle (021), Ray Horricks (037), Martin Coffin (045) and Eric Woodward (081). From overseas came praises from Morris Hodara (162, USA), Paul Bynens (124, Belgium), François-Xavier Moulé (129, France), Alexandre Rado (132, France) and John Hornsby (223, Canada). Elsewhere membership was reported to have exceeded 250.

Volume 3, numbers 3 and 4 brought us much lively correspondence, reviews plus reports on Toronto 1996, our own AGM in April and more information on Leeds 1997.

1997

Another great year for our Society, our newsletter *Blue Light* (all four editions arriving on time and all with 24 pages of essential reading) plus the first UK-based conference since 1988.

The first ten pages of *BL* 4/3 were allocated to coverage of the Leeds conference, with lengthy contributions from Steve Voce, David Fleming and Roger Boyes. However, for me, the most memorable article was written by Malcolm Mitchell, guitarist in the trio (with Jack Fallon and Tony Crombie) which accompanied Duke Ellington, Ray Nance and Kay Davis on their 1948 European tour. Photographs published with the reports included all the Ducal guests at Leeds: Kay Davis, Bill Berry, Norris Turney and Jimmy Woode. (With more in *BL* 4/4 of *inter alia* Pete Long, Mrs Revell, Bob Hunt, Clark Tracey, Bill Berry and Norris Turney).

Volume 4/3 carried a brief obituary on Rolf Ericson who played with Ellington for just over a year from May 1963. Volume 4/3 also carried the Latin motto *Nil significat nisi pulsatur* (ask your local Latin scholar) which still features on the front cover.

By the end of the year, DESUK membership had increased to 309 with a certain Stanley Dance (USA) checking in at number 304.

1998

A year of consolidation. Perhaps to be expected after the heady excitement of our first three full years. Articles and correspondence were as lively as before but some seemed to be written by academics for academics. Exceptions were David Fleming, Roger Boyes, Steve Voce and, for his always lucid record reviews, our redoubtable Chairman Vic Bellerby. David Fleming reported on Ellington 98, the Chicago conference, accompanied by photographs of DESUK members attending.

Life membership was offered for the first time and, at £90 (equivalent to six years' annual membership of £15) several members opted to switch. By the end of 1998 there were 336 members of whom 20 were Life Members.

1999

THE Centenary Year as the cover of *Blue Light* volume 6 number 1 proclaimed and, to mark Duke's 100th birthday, all

editorial copy disappeared from the front cover to be replaced by a large photograph of the maestro: a practice which has continued unbroken to the present day, with the occasional associated musician replacing Duke. The two next inside pages were taken up by editorial notes and correspondence. Then came a two-page spread listing all the known UK events planned to mark the centennial. There followed four pages lifted (with full permission) from Jim Godbolt's *Duke The Great* feature in JARS (Jazz at Ronnie Scott's) magazine which he edited. Tributes to Duke and many individual alumni were written by appropriate musicians (Bob Wilber on Barney Bigard, Jack Fallon/Jimmy Blanton, Tony Crombie/Sonny Greer, Stan Tracey/Duke, Cleo Laine/Adelaide Hall...) followed by famous personalities giving their own impressions and opinions. Too many to reproduce here but the best is also the shortest:

Spike Milligan wrote, "Duke Ellington was the black Ravel." The impossible task of choosing just one Duke for the Desert Island? I'll take the October 1928 version of *The Mooche* on Brunswick.

What a pity that *BL* 6/1 (dated Jan/Feb/Mar 1999) didn't reach members until May (I know this because all my adult life I have dated the arrival of all important letters, bills and magazines!) Sadly this continued with volumes 6/2, 6/3 and 6/4 (which I received on 2nd May 2000!) David Fleming in his editorials always explained and apologised before continuing to write enthusiastically about all related musical and administrative matters. He and his committee colleagues, especially Derek Else, deserve credit for persevering to overcome all the challenges presented to them which gradually improved the situation over the following couple of years. Alas, we did lose several members who failed to renew their subscriptions.

Finally, a record for the longest article ever published in *Blue Light*! Bo Haufman. Secretary of The Duke Ellington Society of Sweden, visited Herb Jeffries in 1995 and recorded a very long interview with "The Bronze Buckaroo". An edited version was published in three parts (*BL* 6/1, 6/3 and 6/4) which covered a total of eight pages of fascinating insights. It is doubtful that this record will ever be beaten!

2000

The four quarterly editions of *Blue Light* arrived on 12 June, 11 August, 30 October and 19 February (2001), a slight improvement on 1999. The number of pages were 20, 24, 20 and 16 respectively. In two of his four editorials David Fleming referred briefly to his illness contributing to these delays and reductions in pagination but his enthusiasm for the cause shone through. He was determined to prove his doctors wrong.

These problems, however, did not result in any loss of quality with interesting articles on Cootie Williams (interviewed by Eric Townley), The 1951 "Coronets" recordings (Roger Boyes), Ellington in 1942 (Peter Townsend) and Bubba Miley (Richard Ehrenzeller). Detailed reports on the Ellington 2000 conference in Hollywood were tabled by Jack Kinsey (*BL* 7/2), Tony Adkins (also *BL* 7/2) and Roger Boyes, Ben Pubols and

David Palmquist (*BL* 7/3). Record reviews appeared from Brian Priestley, Bill Waterfield, David Fleming, Vic Bellerby, Elaine Norsworthy and Bill Bailey.

During 2000 eight new members brought our “membership” to 367 but this did not allow for a number of non-renewals, deaths and one resignation (Steve Voce, apparently upset by something in *Blue Light*, sent a postcard). Six members transferred to life membership.

Obituaries for Britt Woodman and Willie Cook appeared in *BL* 7/4.

2001

A slightly better year for DESUK with 28 new members joining (including a certain Ian Bradley (399). Whatever happened to him?) and all four issues of *BL* volume 8 arriving within three weeks after the end of each quarter. No mean achievement for a voluntary group with many other individual interests and an editor (David Fleming) soldiering on but “...seriously incapacitated by several minor strokes and unable to walk without support”. He was ably supported by Bill Bailey as Associate Editor until they exchanged roles at the end of the year. Derek Else struggled on as both Treasurer and Acting General Secretary, until later in the year he had to relinquish the latter role.

For *Blue Light* contributions Vic Bellerby led the way with even more of his insightful record reviews and the occasional article. Roger Boyes, Brian Priestley and David Fleming contributed regular items. Kevin Henriques “...witnessed the last rites of Pete Long's Echoes of Ellington Orchestra” at the 100 Club after five years keeping the flame alive. He mentioned, *inter alia*, their “...storming contribution to the Ellington '97 Conference at Leeds”. Would we ever hear the like again?

Obituaries continued to feature as we noted the passing of Norris Turney, Larry Adler and the brilliant musicologist and teacher Mark Tucker at the age of 46. Sjef Hoefsmit wrote “The most expensive price one has to pay as one grows older and older is to feel the sorrow of losing your best friends. Eddie Lambert, Klaus Stratemann, Mark Tucker : they all died too young.” We also lost two of our early stalwarts in Ken Rattenbury (10) and Roger Cogswell (79). Two other active contributors relocated: Alun Morgan (8) to Australia and Graham Collier (53) to Spain. Then at the end of the year Ray Bolden (120) died aged 59. He was a committee member from the outset.

2002

The year started very brightly indeed with the arrival from Fife in Scotland of George Duncan as Acting General Secretary. He was rapidly divested of the word “Acting” at the AGM at Ronnie's on 20 April 2002. At the same meeting Treasurer Derek else gave updated membership data: 256 members of whom 56 were life members. There then followed a unanimous vote to invite all surviving alumni of the Ellington Orchestra to become Honorary Members of DESUK. The list can be seen on Page 2 of every subsequent issue of *Blue Light*.

The quality of *Blue Light* articles continued undiminished with Duke himself on “The Future of Jazz” and Stanley Dance on “The Eloquence of Ellington”. Both of these reprinted from the 1958 tour programme and, after a gap of 44 years, why not? Other contributors included Vic Bellerby

(in addition to his unending supply of record reviews), Roger Boyes, George Duncan and Bill Bailey.

Obituaries published in this year included Wendell Marshall (written by David Fleming) and Buster Brown the noted tap dancer who toured the world with Duke (as well as Dizzy, Basie and Calloway). But the *Saddest Tale* for DESUK came right at the end of 2002 with the death of David Fleming at the age of 70.

2003

One benefit of our offer of Honorary Membership to Ellington alumni (all of them accepted) was a tidal wave of thank you letters, many of which were published and/or formed the basis for interviews. Photographs of some recipients decorated the covers from volume 9/2 (Joe Temperley) to Jimmy Woode and Harold Ashby (9/3), Buster Cooper and Clark Terry (9/4), Joya Sherrill and John Lamb (10/1) and finally Msgr John Sanders and Vince Prudente (10/2).

Contributors included Roger Boyes exploring the role of the flute in the Ellington band, Brian Priestley with an analysis of the development of *Rockin' In Rhythm* from 1930 to the end of the Ellington band, Walter van de Leur with a scholarly exploration of the evolution of *C-Jam Blues* and associated (or not) compositions and Ian Bradley with an insight into the 1956 collaboration of Duke, Billy Strayhorn, Rosemary Clooney and George Avakian. Vic Bellerby continued with his prodigious output of record reviews.

Obituaries included Bill Berry (Steve Voce), Peter Tanner (Jerry Valburn and George Avakian) and Benny Carter (Bill Bailey).

New members welcomed during the year included Lance Travis of South Africa (411) and Victor Lawrance (415) who was eventually to become DESUK Treasurer.

2004

Cover photographs of Honorary Members (with tributes inside) continued with *BL* 11/1 (Louie Bellson), *BL* 11/2 (Alice Babs) and *BL* 11/3 (Herb Jeffries).

General Secretary George Duncan continued his updates on DESUK matters and wider aspects of Ellingtonia. The sad death of his dear wife Kathy while they were on holiday in Tenerife was a major blow but, thankfully for our Society, he soon resumed his duties. Articles published included, as part of the Louie Bellson welcome, extracts from Eddie Lambert's *Duke Ellington – A Listener's Guide* and an excerpt from a November 2003 interview with him by Patricia Willard.

Oh yes, did I mention Vic Bellerby?

The passing of Aaron Bell led to a two-part interview by Martin Richards (by kind permission of *Jazz Journal* editor Eddie Cook) and Kevin Henriques wrote a moving obituary on Aaron Bridgers.

After a gap of four years the Ellington international conferences resumed in 2004 and there was detailed coverage of the Stockholm event. 17 DESUK members (plus partners) were among the 150 delegates attending.

(My index finger now needs a rest, so please join me next year for part 2 : 2005 to 2014)

Gerald Wilson

Gerald Wilson, who died on 8 September aged 96, was a compelling speaker at Ellington 2000 in Los Angeles. His arrival on the platform with his shock of white hair, mid-morning, is one of my enduring memories of that conference. He berated the previous presenters, the Smithsonian team, for over-running their time slot and keeping him waiting. Had the representatives of the USA's National Museums ever before been admonished so vigorously and so colourfully? I gather his conducting was equally spectacular.

From Mississippi, Wilson's family made the classic 1920s migration up-river to the boom city of Detroit where Gerald grew up and began his career in music. When still young he joined Jimmie Lunceford's band, from which Tommy Dorsey had lured away Sy Oliver, contributing *Yard Dog Mazurka*, which begat Stan Kenton's *Intermission Riff*.

He left Lunceford in 1942 and settled in southern California, which remained his base for the rest of his life. He was soon arranging for Lee and Lester Young's band, a role he shared with Billy Strayhorn among others. Following his discharge from the armed forces he organized a large band to accompany Herb Jeffries. When Herb went cold on the idea Gerald decided to go it alone, debuting in late 1944. Some 1946 tracks by this band are on two Hep CDs issued under Benny Carter's name (CD 15 and CD 48). The Wilson arrangements, featuring among others 'Lockjaw' Davis, reveal Ellington and bebop influences. Gerald's take on *Come Sunday* is lightly seasoned with a pinch of *Sugar Hill Penthouse*.

In a life which spanned most of the history of jazz itself, he achieved prominence in several fields: trumpeter, bandleader, conductor, composer, arranger, broadcaster, jazz educator. His LA presentation revealed an extremely effective communicator. He told us he had written twelve scores for Duke; all but one were recorded. The first, in 1947, was *You Gotta Crawl Before You Walk*, written, he said, at six in the morning for a performance the same evening. The twelve include *Smile, If I Give My Heart To You* and *When I'm Feeling Kinda Blue* which Ella Fitzgerald sang as *Imagine My Frustration*. In 1960 Duke introduced Gerald's reworking of *Perdido* on the *Piano In The Background* LP, to replace the 1950s score which had showcased Clark Terry.

I became aware of Gerald Wilson as a very young jazz listener, since he is listed in Duke's trumpet section along with the four familiar names of the mid-1950s section on one of the first records I bought, a Capitol EP which included the 8 October 1954 *Caravan*. He also played with the Ellington Orchestra in June 1959 and on the 30 July 1960 session.

From time to time throughout his years in LA he led jazz ensembles, always large, conducting them with balletic vigour. His Mexican-American wife Josefina Villaseñor drew him to Latin-American music, and he had a hit record, *Viva Tirado*, with a Latin-rock band El Chicano. He was also a skilled arranger for singers in several genres. Gerald arranged the songs on Ray Charles's first two country-and-western LPs. Older members will remember the 1962 hit *I Can't Stop Loving You*. In 1972 he composed a work performed by the LA Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta. A 1997 composition, *Theme For Monterey*, was Grammy-nominated. In 2009 on his 91st birthday, he premiered a six-movement *Detroit Suite* celebrating the city in which he grew up. He wrote for films and TV, and for several years in the 1970s he was a radio presenter. He taught jazz courses at Cal State and at UCLA.

The headline of the LA Times obituary, on which I've drawn for much information here, characterizes Gerald Wilson as a 'multifaceted jazz musician'. That's right.

Roger Boyes

Alan Douglas

Record producer Alan Douglas died in Paris on 7 June, aged 82. He worked for Roulette in New York and Barclay in Paris in the 1950s, then took charge of the jazz wing at United Artists in the early 1960s, before going independent. His jazz interests were decidedly advanced – Mingus, Dolphy, John McLaughlin – and he is further associated with Jimi Hendrix, whom he befriended at the Woodstock festival in 1969; and with Lenny Bruce. He recorded the Last Poets, the Harlem-based harbingers of rap.

While with United Artists he produced *Undercurrent*, the classic LP of Bill Evans-Jim Hall duets, and the torrid *Town Hall Concert* of Charles Mingus, an event fraught with problems which ended his relationship with the company. Shortly before it he recorded the LP which warrants his death being recorded in *Blue Light*, the classic encounter in September 1962 between Duke, Mingus and Max Roach, *Money Jungle*.

RB

Derek Else

Derek Else died on 16 July from complications arising from the debilitating illness which had impaired his quality of life for a number of years. The funeral, which took place at the Forest Park Crematorium at Hainault, was organized and led by Derek's sister and brother-in-law. Its format, not conventional, did what

the occasion requires very effectively and with full attention to detail – an accurate reflection, I thought of Derek himself. We sang **Dear Lord and Father of Mankind**, a hymn which Louis Armstrong would have called ‘one of the good old good ones’, and there was fine music from Derek himself, **All Of Me** from his *Who Else For Jazz?* CD. Memorably, former DESUK committee member David Deacon, who had sung with Derek’s band, offered the funeral song from *Cymbeline* (it’s the one which starts ‘Fear no more the heat of the sun’, and ends with ‘golden lads and girls all must, as chimney sweepers, come to dust’), in what I can only call a ‘Sprechgesang’ – more than a recitative, which is what my dictionary has by way of translation.

Along with family members, several musicians from Derek’s playing days were there, and a number of DESUK members. I had the opportunity to outline the huge contribution he made to the running of DESUK over the years since 1994, the details of which are in the article I wrote in 2011 when he retired from the Society’s work (*BL* 18/2 page 7). We were fortunate indeed to benefit from Derek’s support for so long, and I said so, explaining how, in return for his unstinting service, we elected him an Honorary Member, the only one not an Ellington Orchestra alumnus to be awarded that status. We are fortunate indeed to have had the benefit of Derek’s energy and talents for so long, and our thoughts are with his family at their time of loss.

Roger Boyes

Tribute to Derek

An unexpected visit to my house by my former school-classmate, Fred Upcraft, (wonderful pianist as well), helped change my life forever, by adding a dynamic dimension to my own musical experiences.

By inviting me to bring my double-bass to 47 Yoxley Drive, (not a mile away from home) the following Thursday afternoon for a session with some other musicians, to see if we could enjoy ourselves, Fred got me into the world of live jazz, and a much deeper appreciation of the music of Duke Ellington than I already had.

Thus I met Derek Else...must be the best part of 10 years ago now. Getting together in that crowded back room of his house, I met and played with Derek and Fred themselves, the drummer, Mike Nicholls, the vibraphone player, Peter, and later the guitar maestro, Arnold Scrimshire, known to his fellow-jazzers as Scrim. Later in the group’s history we were joined by David Deacon who sang with us towards the end of the era of the *Who Else for Jazz* group.

As an active Committee member of the Duke Ellington Society UK, Derek advertised the Society’s events to us, especially the annual *Jamboree of Jazz*, so I visited

Ronnie Scott’s Club, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and some of the regular record recitals held up on Whitehall. Spin-offs from these meant that I heard the great musicians like Tony Faulkner, Martin Litton, Pete Long and Keith Nicholls, Richard Pite, the Kindadukish band, and vocalists such as Val Wiseman. A highlight for me was the visit in 2008 by some of Duke’s players, in the persons of Art Baron and John Lamb to the international conference of Duke Ellington Societies from round the world, when John was able to make use of my bass to show us what bass-playing is really all about: all courtesy of Derek for arranging things with me.

During the period of the band’s existence we organised gigs at several venues in the Ilford and Manor Park area, getting ourselves a fairly good name, a small group of followers and earning ourselves a few pounds as well. We probably did our best work, and got the most enjoyment, at the Valentines Mansion, before, during and after its refurbishment as an authentic early 18th Century residence, and now a publicly owned architectural masterpiece in Ilford.

Under the very capable direction of Antony Pepper, a room there became a recording studio, and we ‘cut’ our first CD as a quartet in December 2006. Then at what proved to be our swansong in May 2009, Derek called time on our existence as a quartet, plus vocalist, but we have been left with a second CD, recorded live at that gig. Derek realised that his lip and his finger control of the clarinet were diminishing, to the extent that he wouldn’t and couldn’t justify trying to be professional in his playing output, so we said goodbye to all that jazz. A very sad moment for all of us.

Both these recordings stand as a great tribute to the men who belonged to the band, but more particularly to he who guided and lit our way there and since: Derek Else.

May Derek rest in peace, albeit with some good jazz-playing colleagues to continue lighting up Heaven.

Written on behalf of Fred ‘Fingers’ Upcraft, stride-pianist supreme, Mike ‘Mad Dog’ Nicholls, drum and percussion aficionado, Gerald Elvin, part-time and student bass player, and David Deacon, the smooth-voiced Ellingtonian vocalist.

Also with acknowledgements to ‘Scrim’.

Gerald Elvin

They Got It Wrong And Vic Was Right

In 1943 the magazine *Jazz Music* (it rather laboriously styled itself the *Bulletin of the Jazz Sociological Society for Students of Hot Music*) ran a 'Special Ellington Number', a 16-page issue devoted entirely to Duke. Its appearance, in the depths of wartime Britain when newsprint was scarce, reflects the importance attached to Duke's music even then. Perhaps it was a spin-off from the previous January's Carnegie Hall concert at which Ellington had premiered *Black Brown and Beige*.

Not all the publicity resulting from that concert was complimentary to Duke, and that is certainly true for the special issue of *Jazz Music*. It's a surprise to read Charles Fox's sweeping rejection of the 1940 band in favour of the glories of ten or more years earlier. In later years Fox would be the enthusiastic advocate of 'cutting-edge' trends on his long-running BBC Radio programme *Jazz Today*. His article, titled *He's Gotten Bad And That Ain't Good*, begins with a laboured, exculpatory paragraph which almost concedes that what he is going to say will seem ridiculous (it does). He says little about the band or its music, and moves quickly onto ground on which he's clearly more comfortable, a schoolmaster-ish report on the soloists. Essentially, his message is that the new intake is not up to the standard of the departed great alumni, and the survivors no longer play with the force of ten years earlier. At the end of the article he's the schoolmaster once more, this time the one who says, as he beats the boy: this hurts me more than it hurts you.

Even more surprising is the keynote article by Stanley Dance, who would eventually become, in David Hajdu's memorable phrase, an Ellington 'palace official', and the writer of innumerable sleeve-notes for Duke's LPs. I used to think of him as the 'keeper of the sacred mysteries'. Dance begins: 'Judging from the records we [*sic*] have heard recently, the Ellington Orchestra was never worse.' His article is notable for a gratuitous attack on the young (many of whom were in 1943 being put to the test on the battlegrounds of World War Two), personified in Billy Strayhorn, who was clearly not at all welcome in the thirty-three-year-old Dance's world of Duke Ellington. *Raincheck* ('illogical hodge-podge') and *Chelsea Bridge* ('obsession for tone-colour and voicing'), elude him completely. Unlike Fox, who says virtually nothing about the music, Dance comments pertinently, if not very perceptively, about a couple of the 1940 records, before laying into Duke's pastels (not at all to his taste), and ending with his own brief end-of-term report on the soloists (the prospect is bleak).

Both articles reveal that the writers could not engage with Ellington's new music, presumably because of the limitations of their ears. The unavailability of many

late 1930s Ellington records in Europe may be a factor - the 1940 Victors, when they began to appear, were too startlingly different for ears still attuned to Duke's earlier music. This may be true in the case of Fox, who admits to knowing only a few imported records from recent years. But Dance had spent three weeks in New York in 1937 and had hung out with the band. And although the impending war thwarted his intention to go back, he jollied off to Paris to see the band in action in 1939. In 1943 he may well have been in correspondence with Helen Oakley, whom he had met in 1937 and would marry in 1947; in his article he hints as much. His enviable experiences in New York and Paris were evidently not enough to prepare Stanley for the Victors.

Duke of course was notoriously suspicious of critics, and there is a case for reprinting the articles by Fox and Dance in full, to show how well justified that suspicion was. If these are the contributions of Duke's advocates to a magazine's special issue celebrating his achievement, what on earth were his detractors writing about him? On the other hand there's little point in recycling such stuff after all these years; there are better things to reprint. In any case *Blue Light* already reprinted them, in 2002. If you have *BL* 9/3 in your files, you'll find the two articles on pages 16-19. They are an early example of a tendency of some of Duke's self-proclaimed admirers to express their admiration by disparaging what he is doing by comparing it with what he once did. If you don't have *BL* 9/3 and would like to read the articles, we can help you. I have spare copies of *BL* 9/3, or we can forward them as a pdf file.

It is unsurprising that by the mid-1940s Ellington had developed a healthy mistrust of jazz critics and was beginning to say that he really had only one rival - 'some old cat named Ellington'. Some writers 'got' him. For an antidote try the 1942 article in which C T (Bud) McCaffrey Jr. discusses six of the 1940 Victors. Dance mentions three of them in his list of 'approved' recent Ellingtonia. Fox mentions none. McCaffrey's article appeared in another 'little magazine', *Hot Wax*, and was reprinted in *BL* 13/3 (2006). Unlike Fox and Dance McCaffrey does dig into the music intelligently. His name is little known now, but his article wears well.

One enthusiast who did challenge Fox and Dance in 1943 was our late chairman, Vic Bellerby. A later issue of *Jazz Music* ran *Ellington Asides*, the young Vic's impassioned rebuttal of their strictures. It too was reprinted in *BL* 9/3 (pages 19-20). It is a fine tribute to our late chairman, who died last year and who took up his pen long ago to refute the assertions of two men who had dismissed with such self-confidence music about which they understood so little. Within a few years Fox and Dance had changed their minds radically about the 1940 Victors; Vic never

had to, because he appreciated their worth from the start.

From the opening paragraphs of his article Vic adopts a very different stance from that of the schoolmaster airily dispensing judgment from his dais: 'of all jazzmen, Duke merits clear and extremely conscientious thinking.' He explains how he was influenced by something Louis Armstrong had said to a jazz pundit of the time, Leonard Hibbs: it was simply not possible for his music to remain in the 1920s; it had to move on. He tries to define the ways in which Ellington's music, like Louis', has moved on, arguing that Duke 'has acquired an essentially powerful conception of his orchestra', while conceding that there are losses; he has achieved this at the expense of 'much of the old, adorable wistfulness'. He stresses the importance of repeated close listening to the recordings, one of which he listened to ten times before getting his head round it.

Vic notes and describes the rise to prominence of the reeds in Duke's tonal palette, and the changes to the rhythm section. He rejects the 'ivory tower' stance of Fox and Dance, citing Ellington's own explanation in 1939 of the importance of the commercial imperative. He refutes some of their specific generalisations about the music and he avoids end-of-term reports on the musicians, though he praises Ray Nance, rejecting their dismissal of him for not being Cootie, and correctly identifying his role in *Perdido*, which Dance's approving comment on the recording overlooks. In a telling final sentence which also refutes Fox's lofty dismissal of Webster, Vic links *Blue Serge*, probably the piece he listened to so many times before 'getting' it, to *Saddest Tale* and *Blues With A Feeling* from the good old days in which Fox and Dance seem mired.

In April 1959 there was a curious consequence to Dance's 1943 article. By then he had joined Oakley, now his wife, as an Ellington insider, and in addition to being a jazz scribe was producing records. He asked Billy Strayhorn to lead and direct a Hodges session with Quentin Jackson, Russell Procope, Shorty Baker and others. Billy agreed; he loved Hodges, though unsurprisingly he had little time for Dance. The result, *Cue For Saxophone*, appeared under Billy's name, of necessity since Johnny himself was contracted to Norman Granz (his pseudonym on the LP is 'Cue Porter'). Dance professed not to know if Billy had ever read his 1943 strictures: 'I don't know if he ever read a word I wrote about him. He never brought it up, and I didn't either, certainly'. He called their relationship 'a gentlemanly concord'. The recollection of the drummer on the date, Oliver Jackson, was a little at odds with this. 'Stanley and Billy, you know, I'd say kept away from each other....Billy and Rab were so close man, that's the only reason Billy did the date'.

Billy said that as a composer he gave the same care to every project, even the slightest pop songs. He said it in an interview with Dance, so his tongue may well have been in his cheek as he recalled the 1959 date. For *Cue For Saxophone* is something of an exception to his dictum, a blowing session made up of five standards and two original riff numbers attributed to Hodges and Strays and named for Cue, Johnny's wife. She said of the LP: 'I don't think Billy put very much into it'. Jackson agreed: 'He showed up late and he didn't have anything planned. He knocked off whatever arrangements we used off the top of his head. It was *sad*, man. This great musician, and this record had his name on it - there were songs there that had his name on them - and he didn't give a damn about it'.

As an urbane and articulate product of the English public schools system, Stanley Dance was obviously useful to Ellington, not least in the late 1950s when along with Sinclair Traill and Gerald Lascelles he secured the line of communication which led to Duke's meeting with Queen Elizabeth at Leeds Civic Hall. He had much less to offer Billy, a man who preferred to eschew the limelight and follow his star. A coolness between the two is unsurprising, and inevitable if Billy was aware of the 1943 article. Networking, boosterism and political savvy were far more important for Ellington than for Strayhorn, but given Duke's own experience with critics and pundits, I wouldn't be surprised to learn that he too seasoned his confidence in Dance with a dash of well concealed wariness.

Roger Boyes

BLUE LIGHT
Roger Boyes sent me these three articles to accompany his piece *They Got It Wrong And Vic Was Right* in *Blue Light*, vol 2/1 4. All three appeared in an earlier issue of *BL*, vol. 9/3, 18.

Jazz On And Off The Track
by Stanley F Dance
reprinted from *Jazz Music* (Special Ellington Number, 1943)



Judging from the records we have heard recently the Ellington Orchestra was never worse. Many of its old and loyal English admirers must have smiled wryly when they learned that it had topped the annual poll of the American paper *Down Beat*. Of course, although they may have some commercial value, the results of such polls usually carry no artistic significance. Yet I am inclined to believe that for once the readers of *Down Beat* were right, and that the Ellington orchestra,

Jeffries, the 'Bronze Buckaroo'; the slimy, over-praised *I Got It Bad*; and the vulgarly slick and 'modern' inanities of young Billy Strayhorn.

It is a questionable belief, and one which I have come to reluctantly, but I believe that there is no place for today's youth in jazz. Jazz was largely a creation of youth, but a personal creation of the youth of another age. Its birthplace, New Orleans, was undoubtedly gay and exciting. There was plenty of room for individualistic thought and expression. There was the stimulating effect of Spanish, French and Anglo-Saxon influences upon the world of colour. Today, even without war, the background is comparatively hideous. The triumphs of the machine and mass-production have taken the colour out of life. Even thought is mass-produced, the views of axe-grinding newspapers and giggling bands of savants on the radio being accepted widely as solemn, certain truth. Small wonder that when it does try to think for itself, youth is all too often distrustful and unnatural out of perplexity. Mr Strayhorn is an example of today's youth in jazz. He throws tradition overboard. He will have originality at the expense of beauty. His work is entirely to be deplored.

The *ci-devant* Briton Leonard Feather has claimed that Strayhorn's efforts have been 'lauded by critics in two continents'. It may be that some European critics have been careless, but there will be those yet that will damn. From the same article one learns that Strayhorn's *Raincheck* is a masterpiece. Playing it, one finds an illogical and complex hodge-podge. There is no swing inherent in the arrangement. There is no simple lilting melody such as Duke can write, and upon which a jazz musician will happily improvise. The whole thing is like a canvas covered with sprawling splodges of paint lobbed by a painter from the other side of his studio. You say, 'My God! He probably says, 'It's so modern you don't understand it'. But turn the record over.

The articles to which Roger refers in *They Got It Wrong and Vic Was Right* were published in *BL* 9/3 so we will not reprint them in this edition. They have been newly typeset and are available in PDF format, however. If you would like a copy, please contact the Editor via email, details on page 3.

Misunderstanding in Blue by Darcy James Argue



Part of the first page of Duke Ellington's manuscript for *Diminuendo In Blue*

We are grateful to Mr Argue for giving us permission to reprint his article here which first appeared on line in Ethan Iverson's blog *Do The Math*. **IB**

Gunther Schuller is a legendary figure. Schuller's exemplary and wide-ranging career as a horn player, composer, conductor, and scholar have made him A Big Deal in both classical and jazz circles. The Gunther Schuller music that's been most personally meaningful to me includes his justly-famous *7 Studies on Themes of Paul Klee*, his vivid and bracing *Symphony for Brass and Percussion*, and his masterly chamber arrangements for Joe Lovano's *Rush Hour*. I'm also very appreciative of the role he played in reconstructing and posthumously premiering Mingus's long-form epic, *Epitaph*.

Schuller's books *Early Jazz* (1968) and *The Swing Era* (1991) are considered indispensable references and landmarks of jazz scholarship. The scope of these books is honestly kind of insane: in the course of

researching them, Schuller professes to have listened systematically to essentially every surviving jazz recording (as many of them as he could get his hands on, at least), from the beginning of the recording era up to 1945. They are notable for being among a very small number of works accessible to the general public to offer serious melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and structural analyses of jazz recordings. Both volumes are underpinned by copious transcriptions from recorded sources, with detailed commentary by Schuller. It's impossible to come away from these books without admiring Schuller's deep love of and genuine engagement with jazz. We'd have a healthier musical culture all-around if more classically-trained composers and instrumentalists shared even the tiniest bit of Gunther's authentic interest in how jazz actually works.

Unfortunately, however much I respect Schuller's ambition and noble intentions, I think it's also important to point out that the transcriptions in both of

these volumes are often not accurate. And we are not talking about run-of-the-mill transcription errors here — as (expert transcriber) Bill Dobbins noted, when it comes to complex music, even the best transcriptions are going to be least 10 to 15 per cent guesswork. That's understandable. But many of the transcription errors in Schuller's books are much more fundamental. Worse, they lead to mistaken conclusions.

When I first began to notice this, I was genuinely shocked. Schuller has a reputation for having some of the best ears in the business! And yet here he was making some pretty basic mistakes. His editors deserve to eat some crow here too, as even a cursory listen to the recorded sources would have revealed many of the problems.

Ethan has had previous occasion to point out some of the rhythmic and metric errors Schuller made in his transcriptions of Art Tatum (in *The Swing Era*) and Ornette Coleman (in a 1961 anthology of Schuller-transcribed Ornette tunes). I also recently remarked on a particularly glaring howler from *Early Jazz*, where Schuller's incorrect transcription of *Mood Indigo* leads him to a mistaken conclusion: that it employs "the kind of parallel motion that a pianist would use," when in fact *Mood Indigo* is one of the best examples of independent linear voice-leading in all of Ellington.

An even bigger and more perplexing set of mistakes plagues Schuller's analysis of Ellington's 1937 *Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue*, which he discusses at length in *The Swing Era*. This is a piece that is familiar even to those who don't know much Ellington — the 1956 Newport recording, featuring Paul Gonsalves' pandemonium-inducing, 27-chorus "wailing interval," remains Duke's best-selling album. But despite all of the great stories about this legendary performance, discussion of the composition itself tends to get short shrift. *Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue* actually dates back to 1937 — the original recording is available on the Mosaic 1932-1940 Brunswick & Columbia box set. The most successful and viscerally satisfying of Duke's various forays into "extended works" during the 1930s, *Diminuendo in Blue* was the A-side and the *Crescendo in Blue* was the B-side of a 78 RPM record; the two halves comprise a single, tightly structured piece. It's a stunning achievement, six minutes of sustained genius, shot through with radical new ideas. (Jim McNeely once told me that every time he thinks he's come up with a really hip arranging idea, it usually turns out that Duke did it first, 70-80 years ago. This is probably one of the pieces he had in mind!)

The manuscript inspired me to look at Schuller's discussion of *Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue* from *The Swing Era*. Here's how Gunther describes the work:

"*Diminuendo and Crescendo* in its original 1937 form was, like *Reminiscing in Tempo*, a full-fledged written composition with virtually no improvisation. For a jazz piece it was relatively demanding in structure and harmonically, technically complex. Though based on blues changes, *Diminuendo in Blue* featured elongated 14-bar blues choruses with 2½ -bar subdivisions and modulated through a maze of five different keys. Moreover the modulations are often abrupt, startling shifts in tonality which were hard to digest, both for the players and the audience. After the initial key of Eb, the work modulates to G for two choruses, then to C, then to a highly chromatically altered Ab, finally coming to rest on Db as the overall diminuendo of the piece reaches its quiescent resting point."

	A					B							C					
chord progression	I	IV	I	V	I	I	IV	I	V	I	I	VII	I	IV	I	V	I	V
number of measures	4	2½	2½	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	2	2	2	3	1
measures	14					14							14					

(A, B, C show the three types of phrase structures Ellington uses. The last two measures of B constitute a modulation to a new key.)

The first two sentences above are true, but almost everything Schuller says after that is incorrect.

To take it point-by-point:

Diminuendo in Blue is built primarily from 12-bar blues choruses. There is one (but only one) chorus that is arguably 14 bars.¹

There is one (but only one) passage which could arguably be analysed as a "2½-bar subdivision".

None of the harmonic progressions Schuller outlines above are used in *Diminuendo*.

All of the modulations are prepared. None of them is "abrupt."

The "highly chromatically altered Ab" chorus Schuller mentions is actually an F minor blues.

Here is the actual formal plan of *Diminuendo in Blue* (in its original 1937 recording):

Diminuendo in Blue

FORM

- [A] CHORUS 1: Blues in Eb (12 bars)
- [B] CHORUS 2: Blues in Eb (10 bars)
- [C] FALSE START+INTERLUDE: FALSE START (Eb) begins same as CHORUS 2 (4 bars) then INTERLUDE on VII pedal (2 bars)
- [D] CHORUS 3: Blues in G (12 bars)
- [E] CHORUS 4: Blues in G (12 bars)
- [F] CHORUS 5: Blues in C (12 bars)

¹ *Crescendo in Blue* begins with a pair of unambiguous 14-bar blues choruses, but none of the *Diminuendo* choruses are like that. Some listeners might be inclined to fold in the 4-bar FALSE START with the truncated, 10-bar CHORUS 2 (see below) and label them as a single 14-bar blues chorus... but even so, that would still be the only 14-bar chorus in all of *Diminuendo*.

[G] CHORUS 6: Blues in F minor (12 bars)
 [H] CHORUS 7: Blues in Db (12 bars)
 [I] CHORUS 8: Blues in Db (12 bars)
 [J] CHORUS 9: Blues in Db (12 bars)
 [K] CHORUS 10: Blues in Db (12 bars)
 [L] "STAGE FADE" CODA: Db7#9 vamp (6 bars)

NOTES:

CHORUS 1: Full band. The IV chord is prolonged by a half-bar (which I guess you could label as a "2½ bar subdivision") but the V chord comes as expected in the ninth bar of the form — not the tenth bar, as Schuller has it on his diagram.

The ninth bar also brings us this strikingly unusual three-measure turnaround:

| V7 | IV7 bII7 | II7 bII7 |

This causes the tonic chord to be delayed until the twelfth bar. But there's no mistaking the top of the second chorus on the downbeat of the thirteenth bar!

(Also check out the forward-looking upper-structure voicings Duke uses in the brass on those E7 and F7 chords, which sound a lot closer to 1967 than 1937!)

CHORUS 2 and FALSE START+INTERLUDE: Full band. The beginning of the FALSE START following CHORUS 2 is extremely deceptive: on first listen, we really want to hear the first two bars of the FALSE START as the final two bars of CHORUS 2, which would make CHORUS 2 the usual 12-bar blues. But this is actually masterly Ellingtonian misdirection! The first three bars of the FALSE START are identical to the first three bars of CHORUS 2, and the fourth bar of each is similar. These measures each make up a single, continuous four-bar phrase, meaning that with the benefit of hindsight, we can identify CHORUS 2 as a shortened, 10-bar blues form (lopping off the final two bars of a 12-bar blues become a hip trick favoured by many subsequent composers and arrangers), followed by a 4-bar phrase — the FALSE START — which begins as a literal repeat of CHORUS 2. But then instead of going to the IV chord in the fifth bar, the FALSE START transitions into the *Interlude*: a 2-bar VII7 (D7) pedal, which functions as the dominant of the upcoming key (G).

This stretch of music is extremely deceptive, however, so others might not hear it the same way. Sonny Greer doesn't mark any of this stuff so we are on our own here! As I mentioned above, it's also possible to hear the FALSE START as a prolongation of CHORUS 2, making it a 14-bar blues chorus followed by a 2-bar interlude. (That interpretation is supported by the placement of the double bar lines on Duke's manuscript, though I'm not sure we should read too much into that — the double bars might easily have been added by a copyist after the fact.)

Ethan Iverson and I have talked about this section, and he hears the second chorus as a straight 12-bar blues, followed by a 2-bar false start before the 2-bar interlude. That honestly seems utterly perverse to me — it breaks up the middle of what I'd consider an indivisible 4-bar phrase! But all of these conflicting interpretations really drive home the subtlety and artfulness with which Duke disguises the top of the form.

CHORUS 3: Full band. Here, once again, the top of the form is obscured. This time it's the continuation of the D pedal into the beginning of CHORUS 3² that leaves us feeling utterly disoriented... and then Sonny Greer goes and throws yet another spanner in the works by setting up the third bar of the form instead of the top! It's not until the IV7 chord comes in the fifth bar of this chorus that we get our bearings back again. But even after that, Duke continues to mess with us: he cleverly creates the impression of asymmetry by repeating the opening phrase of this chorus a bar earlier than we're expecting. This surprise entrance in bar eight of the form (instead of bar nine) flips the phrase structure and makes us hear the figure in a new way.

CHORUS 4: Full band. The blues tonic I7 (G7) is a pivot that functions as the V7 of the upcoming key (C).

CHORUS 5: Full band. Again, the blues tonic I7 (C7) is a pivot that functions as the V7 of the upcoming key (F minor).

CHORUS 6: Trombones with unison sax counterline. The final measure has a III7 chord (Ab7) on the third beat, which also functions as the dominant of the upcoming key (Db).

CHORUS 7: Sax soli.

CHORUS 8: Cootie Williams solo (composed) over saxophones.

CHORUS 9: Harry Carney solo (composed) over trombones.

CHORUS 10: Duke solo (composed) with bass only (drums drop out). All of the harmonies have #9ths added to them — if there's an earlier instance of anyone doing this on a blues, I'd love to hear it! Also, the IV7(#9) voicing is planed into from a parallel voicing a whole step above, and the left-hand bass line Ellington plays at the end of the chorus emphasizes the b9th of both V and I. All of this points towards a modal approach to the blues using the entire diminished scale, something that would not really take

² Different bassists have treated this different ways... Billy Taylor plays the dominant pedal at the top of CHORUS 3 the same way on both the original and alternate 1937 takes. But in a 1945 Treasury Show recording issued on V-Disc, Junior Raglin plays G on the downbeat and walks G7 throughout these two measures instead of continuing the pedal, and most subsequent bassists seem to have followed suit. (Also, Sonny Greer is a bit clearer about the top of the form on the V-Disc version — though he *also* sets up bar 3!)

hold in jazz until Coltrane and McCoy Tyner started doing it in the 1960's.

"STAGE FADE" CODA: The final phrase of CHORUS 10 becomes a bass-and-piano vamp, fading to nothing. Vamping on I7(#9) is over-familiar to us now (James Brown, Jimi Hendrix, etc etc ad infinitum) but this could easily be Patient Zero of that syndrome.

What's most frustrating about all these errors is that they cause Schuller to overlook almost everything that makes *Diminuendo in Blue* such a badass tour-de-force. He does not address any of the (actual) harmonic variations to the blues structure Ellington employs: the I-VI-II-V "Rhythm" changes turnaround at the top of the second chorus, the chromatically descending II7 - bII7 figure in the second bar of the fourth chorus, those prophetic sharp-ninth chords in Duke's solo... not even that jaw-dropping three-bar turnaround at the end of the first chorus. Nor does he point out how the top of the form is at times deliberately obscured, another startlingly innovative technique that remained essentially unused in jazz until Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter and Tony Williams started doing it in Miles Davis's band in the mid-1960s. Schuller doesn't outline how the dense, overlapping, asymmetrical figures of the first few choruses gradually resolve into a more standard call-and-response pattern by the fifth chorus (the last full band chorus). This is key to the narrative arc of the piece, which involves not just a gradual reduction in volume and instrumental forces, but also a journey from deceptiveness, ambiguity, asymmetry, and instability towards eventual clarity. He doesn't explore the sophisticated — almost Mahlerian — relationship between each of the keys, nor the brilliant symmetry of the harmonic plan: we begin with Eb up a major third to G and end with F minor down a major third to Db, separated by two modulations along the circle of fifths.³ Schuller laments the "thrice-familiar riff clichés" as "not striking or strong enough to support or justify such complexity," but meanwhile he's missed all of the varied and subtle ways Duke uses our familiarity with "riff clichés" and 12-bar blues structure to mess with us. I mean it seems to me that this is the entire point of the piece — to both embody and explode the familiar blues form!

I'm a bit worried that all this analytical talk might make *Diminuendo* sound like a purely intellectual exercise, but if so, there's a simple cure: just close your eyes and listen to the damn thing. It's one of the most purely thrilling recordings in Duke's entire discography, and the band swings like demons throughout. Amazingly, though, Schuller even

chastises their execution, lamenting the "two-beat rhythmic feeling and rather stiffly played figures." Damn, Gunther, we should all be so stiff! He also claims that "both critics and audiences were confounded and reacted either apathetically or negatively" — but, as Terry Teachout notes, even before the famous Newport version, *Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue* was a showstopper: following a performance at Randall's Island in May 1938, three thousand audience members stormed the stage and extra police needed to be called in to restore order.

It seems to me that if Schuller had made comparable errors about, say, Schoenberg, people would notice. Possibly these errors were widely discussed by academics when *The Swing Era* was first published — though if so, those much-needed correctives don't seem to have left much of a trail on Google. Honestly, Schuller's mistakes bother me far more than any number of ignorant think-pieces by writers like Maria Popova, Adam Gopnik, etc. They aren't musicians or scholars. But Schuller is. He's a tremendously respected figure whose word carries weight. So it's dispiriting to see him get a landmark Ellington work so wrong, and to see those mistakes go unchallenged.

This is also why we desperately need a proper critical edition of Ellington scores, one that draws on his original manuscripts, the surviving instrumental parts, and all other relevant sources. This is what's routinely done for classical composers of any significance, and it's deeply shameful that we haven't managed to do the same for Duke. I'm glad Ellington's papers are being preserved by the Smithsonian, but preservation is not enough. They need to be accessible. Surely the Smithsonian has digitized the manuscripts (or is in the process of doing so). Why not make at least some of them available online? 24 May 2014, marked 40 years since Ellington's death, and you still can't buy a score that isn't a transcription. (I understand Loren Schoenberg has been trying for decades to get the manuscripts published — people need to get behind him on this!)

We all know that what makes Duke Duke can't be entirely captured by what's on the page. The Ellington Effect is, and always will be, ineffable, mysterious, unknowable. But to amplify an important theme: if we're going to have a proper discussion of Ellington's body of work and artistic legacy, it's vitally important to know what he actually put to paper.

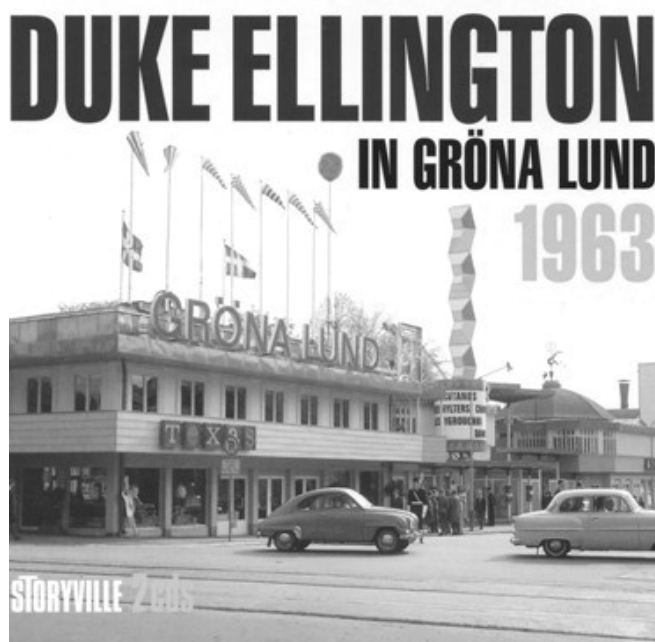
About the author:

Darcy James Argue is a Canadian composer and bandleader, born, almost a year to the day after Ellington's death on 23 May, 1975. In 2005, Argue founded Darcy James Argue's Secret Society, an 18piece steampunk big band. His 2013 album Brooklyn Babylon was nominated for a Grammy. IB

³ This is doubtless coincidental, but that final modulation to Db occurs awfully close to the golden ratio...

On Record

DUKE ELLINGTON
IN GRÖNA LUND 1963



CD1: *Boo-Dah; Laura; Main Stem; Take The 'A' Train; Suite Thursday; Misfit Blues; Schwiphti; Zweet Zursday; Lay-By; Deep Purple; Silk Lace; New Concerto For Cootie (Do Nothin'....); Tootie For Cootie; The Star-Crossed Lovers; Things Ain't What Thy Used To Be.* (64:50)

CD2: *Intermission Music by Duke Ellington; I Didn't Know About You; All Of Me; Jeep's Blues; Rose Of The Rio Grande; Black And Tan Fantasy; Kind Of Dukish & Rockin' In Rhythm; In A Sentimental Mood; Mr Gentle And Mr Cool; Lullaby Of Birdland; Mood Indigo; Sophisticated Lady; I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart/Don't Get Around Much Anymore; One More Once (One More Bossa Nova); One More Once (One More Twist).* (74:20)

Cootie Williams, Eddie Preston, Rolf Ericson (tp), Ray Nance (tp, vn, vo); Lawrence Brown, Chuck Connors, Buster Cooper (tb); Jimmy Hamilton, Russell Procope, Johnny Hodges, Paul Gonsalves, Harry Carney (reeds); Duke Ellington (p), Ernie Shepard (b), Sam Woodyard (d).

Producer: Anders Stefansen

Gröna Lund, Stockholm, 8 June 1963

Storyville 103 8330

Gröna Lund is a concert venue and amusement park in Stockholm, famous for its roller coasters. The Ellington Orchestra spent most of June 1963 in Sweden, including 4-9 June at Gröna Lund. They played a half-hour outdoor concert on each of the six days, and on Saturday 8th, they also performed indoors at the venue's Dance Inn. A total of eight different shows were recorded, at least in part, by Benny Aasland. According to Ken Steiner's authoritative liner notes, the outdoor 8 June concert which preceded the dance date presented here will be included in a future 8CD Storyville box set.

Most of the date was recorded. However, the beginning of *Boo-Dah* is absent. Reminiscent of Jack Towers' disc changes at Fargo, the end of *Silk Lace* is cut off, as is the beginning of the Cootie Williams feature *Concerto For Cootie (Do Nothing' Till You Hear From Me)*. The end of the final track, the second version of *One More Once* is also missing. *Mood Indigo* is complete but extends into the first minute or so of the next track, *Sophisticated Lady*.

The sound quality is excellent aside from intermittent distortion introduced by the stage microphone, particularly evident on Ellington's announcements and higher volume notes from Johnny Hodges' alto. The date is distinctive for Duke's extended piano introduction to *'A' Train*, Rolf Ericson's solos on *Lullaby Of Birdland*, and the final known performance of *Suite Thursday*.

Between sets, Duke plays a fairly lengthy piano solo while waiting for the band to emerge onstage. The solo samples *Skillipoop* and possibly *Dance #3* from the *Liberian Suite*.

Brian Koller

Not only is this the last known performance of *Suite Thursday*, as Brian notes; none of the four individual movements survives in any later performance either. It seems remarkable that this final outing of the suite, which was commissioned for a jazz festival, should take place in a dance hall; it takes the band by surprise. I've never studied the suite closely (my loss), but I find it a wholly convincing performance, very different from the Columbia studio recording. The twenty-minute suite is not banded into its four sections - annoyingly, I thought at first. I know nothing about the technique of banding but it may be that to attempt it

would have compromised the performance's integrity, for the four movements do flow one into another here – the proverbial seamless robe. You can take Duke's statement that the band hadn't played it for some time with a pinch of salt. There are two earlier versions from 1963, and two more of the first two movements. The loss with Ray Nance's departure of the solo violin option would have ruled out later performances unless some brave soul took it over on another instrument. Who could have done that? Hamilton perhaps?

The suite, and the preceding '*A' Train*' with one of Duke's most euphoric piano set-ups, are alone reasons to make this release most welcome. Many of these titles were staples of the dance-hall book, including the Ellington standards which were usually slotted into the medley in the concert hall, but which here are given their due with full-length treatment. The Jimmy Hamilton feature *Silk Lace*, performed throughout this period to promote the recent *Afro-Bossa* LP, introduces a Latin beat, while *One More Once* is the vehicle for two 1960s fashions, the bossa nova and the twist. *Lullaby Of Birdland* was revived in 1963 to spotlight Sweden's Rolf Ericson; in the 1950s it had been an occasional feature for Gonsalves and Terry (later Cook).

The long and to my ear very 'fresh' piano solo listed as 'intermission music' offers the earliest known snatch of *Skillipoop*, which would emerge later in the summer in *My People*. It runs into an unusual and delightful *I Didn't Know About You*, featuring Hodges in a quartet setting with Duke at the piano. Like *All Of Me*, the very fine *Jeep's Blues* is a more frequent item in the Hodges segment. Paul Gonsalves replaces the original Mr. Gentle Shorty Baker in the last known performance of *Mr. Gentle And Mr. Cool*. A live version of this 1958 piece is most welcome, as is the full-length *Black And Tan Fantasy*, usually a two-chorus affair by the 1960s; it spotlights Nance, Brown and Procope. A response to a request for *Rose Of The Rio Grande* also features Brown. This Gonsalves *Laura* is much finer than the 1960 one from Mather AFB.

The technical glitches Brian mentions don't matter at all compared to the excellence of the music here. The inventive piano set-ups, most of them no doubt necessary to enable the players to find in their pads parts for pieces they seldom played, are an added bonus. Ken Steiner's notes rightly point up Ernie Shepherd's contribution to the excellence of the rhythm section. How lucky our Swedish friends were to be able to enjoy Duke's music freed from the constraints of the concert hall. An indispensable issue for the serious enthusiast.

Roger Boyes

DUKE ELLINGTON THE TREASURY SHOWS VOL.18

CD1: *Jam A-Ditti**; *Blue Is The Night**; *Passion Flower*¹*; *Take The 'A' Train*; *Mood To Be Woored*; *Caravan*; *Bond Promo*; *Don't Take Your Love From Me¹*; *Take The 'A' Train*; *The Blues*; *Bond Promo*; *Sono¹*; *One O'Clock Jump*; *I'm Just A Lucky So And So*; *Riff Staccato*; *Just A-Sittin' And A-Rockin'*; *Rockabye River*; *Jumping Frog Jump*; *Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me*; *Johnny Come Lately*; *Poinciana*; *On The Alamo*; *Three Cent Stomp*; *I Didn't Know About You* (74:40)

CD2: *Take The 'A' Train*; *Stompy Jones*; *Moon Mist*; *Bond Promo*; *Just A-Sittin' And A-Rockin'¹*; *I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me*; *Sophisticated Lady*; *Bond Promo*; *Jennie*; *I'm Just A Lucky So And So*; *Black Brown And Beige: Come Sunday and Light*; *Bond Promo*; *We'll Be Together Again¹*; *Hollywood Hangover*; *Subtle Slough*; *Bond Promo*; *Perdido*; *Time Alone Will Tell*; *San Fernando Valley*; *Stomp Look And Listen*; *Concerto For Cootie*; *Long Ago And Far Away*; *Someone*; *Suddenly It Jumped*; *Things Ain't What They Used To Be* (74:26)

CD1 personnels (1946 tracks): Shelton Hemphill, Taft Jordan, Francis Williams, Cat Anderson, Reunald Jones (tp) (*Bernard Flood replaces Jones), Ray Nance (tp, vn, vo); Joe Nanton, Lawrence Brown, Claude Jones, Wilbur de Paris (tb); Jimmy Hamilton, Al Sears, Russell Procope (*Otto Hardwick replaces Procope), Johnny Hodges, Harry Carney (reeds); Duke Ellington (¹Billy Strayhorn) (p), Fred Guy (g), Oscar Pettiford (b), Sonny Greer (d); Kay Davis, Al Hibbler (vo)

(1944 tracks): Rex Stewart (ct), Shelton Hemphill, Taft Jordan (tp), Ray Nance (tp, vn, vo); Joe Nanton, Claude Jones, Lawrence Brown (tb); Jimmy Hamilton, Elbert 'Skippy' Williams, Johnny Hodges, Otto Hardwick, Harry Carney (reeds); Duke Ellington (p), Fred Guy (g), Junior Raglin (b), Sonny Greer (d). Al Hibbler (vo)

CD2 personnels: 1946 tks 1-16 as CD1 tks 4-16, ie w Jones, not Flood. Cat Anderson absent. Russell Procope replaces Hardwick in the reeds. 1944 tks 18-25 as CD1 tks 17-24 but Al Sears replaces Williams in the reeds.

CD1: tks 1-3, bc San Antonio Texas, 13 April 1946. tks 4-16, bc Howard Theatre Washington DC, 20 April 1946. tks 17-24, MBS bc Hurricane Rest., NYC 28 April 1944

CD2: tks 1-17 bc Worcester Mass., 27 April 1946.

tk 18-21 MBS bc Hurricane Rest., 12 May 1944.
tk 22-25 MBS bc Hurricane Rest., 19 May 1944.
DETS 903 9018

On the three San Antonio tracks the sound is slightly noisy and muffled. The audio quality is very good on the Washington broadcast and on tracks 1-10 of the Worcester MA broadcast. Tracks 11-17 from Worcester are somewhat noisy. On the April 1944 Hurricane broadcast the audio is somewhat noisy and noticeably speeded up. The 12 May Hurricane broadcast has substantial surface noise and the 19 May one has considerable surface noise.

Volume 18 is the latest entry in the long-running Storyville series covering Ellington's 1945-46 Treasury Shows which reissue the content of Jerry Valburn's limited release DETS LPs from the 1980s, and add, as extras, various air checks from the 1940s. This one includes the titles from DETS albums 34 and 35, and adds surviving portions of three Hurricane air checks from 1944.

13 April 1946 was the first Treasury Show after 24 November 1945. It appears that the Armed Forces Radio Service neglected to record the 13 April show and the second half of the one on 27 April. Recordings from these shows survive due to air checks. All we have from the 13 April broadcast is portions of three titles. The 20 and 27 April shows appear to be complete as broadcast, except for a missing section that affects the end of *I'm Just A Lucky So And So* and the start of *Come Sunday*, and the deletion of an Ellington bond promo (Track 2-12). Some discographies list an additional bond promo following *Riff Staccato*, absent here. My Ellington collection lacks a copy of DETS 34, which may include it.

The 13 April show marked the final appearance of Otto Hardwicke in the Ellington Orchestra. On 20 April he is replaced by Russell Procope, who remained with the orchestra for the next 28 years. Cat Anderson, absent from the 27 April show, returned on 9 July.

Rare titles include *Jumping Frog Jump* featuring Harry Carney and Joe Nanton, *Poinciana* featuring Hamilton, *We'll Be Together Again* (Kay Davis), *Time Alone Will Tell* featuring (Lawrence Brown), and *Long Ago And Far Away* (Al Hibbler). Liner notes are by Ivan Sundberg.

Brian Koller

All the 1945 Treasury Shows are now on CD, so this set, which takes up the story in April 1946 when the broadcasts resumed, is something of an Ellington milestone. As I've never heard the 1946 Shows I await future issues with keen anticipation.

Klaus Stratemann tells us (p266) that the Shows were resumed without publicity, which is perhaps just as well since the first, on 13 April, was technically a

shambles, according to Leonard Feather's review (Vail, *Duke's Diary 1* p292), and the recording dumped. The three incomplete and muddy-sounding tracks which open CD1 are apparently all that survives. *Jam-A-Ditti* is an electrically charged fragment. Feather tells us that the complete triptych of which it's the closing part was played, and it's a great shame we've lost the rest. *Blue Is The Night* ends abruptly halfway through the final chorus. *Passion Flower* is almost complete, but cut short a bar into Hodges' coda. Ray Nance and Tricky Sam Nanton return to the band, though neither solos on these tracks. Ray solos on all other surviving versions of *Blue Is The Night* from 1945-47, and while it's no surprise that Taft Jordan took it over during Ray's absence, it's odd that he keeps the solo here, with Ray back in the band.

From the casual listening point of view the three are a poor start to CD1, though an essential one in order to preserve series continuity. Other performances without these imperfections are readily available, and reference to the Musicraft or the 4 Jan 46 Carnegie Hall version will make sense of the *Jam-A-Ditti* fragment. The poor balance shows off Pettiford's magnificent playing to great effect.

The 20 April broadcast, happily complete, restores the usual sound quality. It marks another milestone, as Russell Procope replaces Otto Hardwicke, who walked off the stage of the Howard Theatre during this week and left the band forever.

Mood To Be Woood and *Caravan* both receive the usual impeccable performances. Duke played this arrangement of *Don't Take Your Love From Me*, written in 1941 and one of Henry (not Frank) Nemo's best songs, in a late 1945 Treasury Show, and it's no surprise that he returned to it in 1946. Billy arranged it, and he also plays fine piano on this version. Hodges solos before Al Hibbler returns to the mike; the trumpet obligatos on the earlier version are dispensed with, now Rex has left the band. Ivan Sundberg's note speculates on why Duke chose not to record this strong song with obvious hit potential. The choice may well not have been his, but Victor's, with whom his relations were now in terminal decline. If so, one feels they may have missed a trick by ignoring it.

The announcer is now faded out and in, and a second *A Train* theme suggests the start of another broadcast. Maybe the shows were now being offered in shorter segments to participating stations. Whatever the reason may be, it doesn't make for good continuity. However, the version of *The Blues* which follows is of great interest. In 1945 Marie Ellington took over the vocal which Joya Sherrill had inherited from Betty Roché. Marie left late in the year, and Joya sang it at January's Carnegie Hall concert. By April Joya too had left, so Kay Davis now sings it, a responsibility

she retained until *The Blues* was dropped from the active book around 1947; she discharges it with great dramatic effect. A fascinating innovation is the expanded *Carnegie Blues* segment which now includes a call-and-response ‘preachers’ chorus between Al Sears and Lawrence Brown. The saxes are superb, and Oscar Pettiford’s bass line also merits close attention.

Sono is familiar from concerts earlier in the year and from the Capitol Transcriptions recording. Carney was always utterly dependable, but this five-minute-plus *Sono* is particularly powerful, with an opening cadenza which anticipates *VIPs Boogie*. These are early readings of *Sono*, *One O’Clock Jump*, one of a handful of Buck Clayton arrangements Duke commissioned, and *I’m Just A Lucky So-And-So*. In contrast, one of the last performances of *Riff Staccato* reflects Ray Nance’s recent return to the fold. Sundberg’s note is out by a year (on *Jumping Frog Jump* he’s out by two).

Another recent returner, Joe Nanton, contributes briefly towards the end of the fine *Stompy Jones* which opens the Worcester broadcast on CD2, poignantly revealing that he was only partially recovered from his stroke. Taft Jordan takes the trumpet solo which was originally Cootie’s, later Rex’s. Carney’s fiery contribution, in solo and ensemble, is one of several forceful ones he makes to this broadcast. The revival of *Moon Mist* is another consequence of Ray’s return, and he, Hodges and Brown contribute very persuasively to this beautiful performance. Sundberg claims *Moon Mist* was originally entrusted to Ben Webster. Is that so? I know of no recorded evidence to support the claim. Nance, Pettiford and Sears all contribute mightily to an earthy full-length *Just A-Sittin’ And A’Rockin’*. Ray mixes ‘schemin’ and ‘dreamin’ – an obvious slip which leads to amusing speculation as to why the lady dumped the lamenting singer. After some initial roughnesses Carney and Jordan are excellent on a fired-up *I Can’t Believe That You’re In Love With Me*.

An unusual offering on these shows is Duke’s fine two-chorus piano solo version of *Sophisticated Lady*. Cat Anderson’s solo on *Jennie* echoes the style of Rex Stewart, his predecessor on this piece. This week’s *So-And-So* fades just before Lawrence Brown concludes his solo. Next we hear a fade-in to *Come Sunday* and *Light*, the twelve-minute conclusion of *Black*, from *Black, Brown And Beige*, for which I wrote a run-down in my notes for the 10 November 1945 performance on vol. 16 of this series. Ray now reclaims his violin passages from Cat Anderson. We can also compare Oscar Pettiford’s approach to the double-bass passages with Lloyd Trotman’s in November.

Duke’s Bonds pitch follows, but is faded out. This is a relief. Duke’s evident sincerity when he spoke about the needs of injured servicemen made the plugs bearable, but now the war is over the scripts are more mundane, appealing to such personal aspirations as a trip to Paris or putting junior through college. Kay Davis sings *We’ll Be Together Again*, Carl Fischer’s decidedly adventurous song. Fischer played piano for Frankie Laine, the lyricist, and this is the only surviving version we have of Billy’s fine arrangement. On the blues *Hollywood Hangover*, another of the handful of Buck Clayton commissions for the band, Wilbur De Paris takes the trombone solo even though Tricky is now back in his chair. We do hear Tricky, in tandem with Ray Nance, on *Subtle Slough*. This fine version is the last before the addition of the Lee Gaines *Just Squeeze Me* lyric. Lovely Strayhorn comping redeems the Bonds Plug which follows, and a short *Perdido* concludes the broadcast very effectively, with Taft as usual in Chorus 2, the scored trombones chorus behind the closing announcement, and the usual ending kicking in for the final eight bars.

Now for the 1944 Hurricane fillers. Four of the eight 28 April titles on CD1 appeared long ago on very obscure LPs, the rest are previously unreleased. I have versions of five of them from other broadcasts in May, on a Musica Jazz CD, and a cursory comparison of three suggests the 28 April ones are pitched higher, by maybe a semitone, so the 28 April tracks here are speeded up. The problem may well go back to the copying of the original broadcast in 1944, or the way it was recorded in the first place. Does anyone have either of those obscure LPs, a Caracol and a White Label? It’s a shame the source copy wasn’t slowed down a semitone, but the broadcast is of great interest and value. *Rockabye River* is announced as *Hop Skip And Jump*, and its alternate title goes well with the next track, the first of only two surviving versions of *Jumping Frog Jump* to be issued, ever. It’s the same for *Poinciana*, which you won’t know unless you have the Musica Jazz CD. *Frog* has nothing to do with Ben Webster, but was inspired, Duke tells us, by Mark Twain’s story, *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* (California, and where they still have an annual frog fair). Carney and Nanton solo. *On The Alamo* features on a couple of DETS CDs from summer 1945, and the balance of music from this broadcast is familiar from other versions. Skippy Williams solos on *Three Cent Stomp*, as he did on the 1943 World Transcriptions studio recording.

None of the eight titles from two May broadcasts on CD2 has been issued before, and these are the only known Ellington versions of *Time Alone Will Tell* and the great Kern-Gershwin song, *Long Ago And Far Away*. *San Fernando Valley*, which has brief windows for Stewart and Hodges before the broadcast abruptly

fades, is also new to me; the other pieces are familiar. The opening snatch of *Concerto For Cootie* is not announced as a signing-off, though it cuts out immediately after Nance's wrong initial entry. We know Ray did play Cootie's specialty before it became *Do Nothing...* from a summer 1942 recording from the Sherman, never issued. On this very early *Stomp Look And Listen* Taft Jordan takes the swap-of-fours with Ray Nance in chorus 2; at the end of the 1940s Shorty Baker would succeed him in the role, and in the 1950s Willie Cook. *Suddenly It Jumped* is another very early performance of a number that would stay in the active book until the start of the 1950s.

As usual the sound on the Hurricane checks is poorer than on the Treasury Shows, and there are many blemishes; the music is of unfailing interest, as ever. Though full, Sundberg's notes contain errors and odd judgments, as I've shown. The applause dubbed onto the Washington set is absent from Worcester. Flaws, great and small, on these CDs may annoy casual listeners, but for the specialist everything here has its rewards. Another big thank-you is due to our friends at Storyville.

Roger Boyes

For The Record

My People

It has been reported that Ace Records have reissued, on Boplicity CDBOPM 027, the *My People* compilation previously released on Red Baron and originally on LP (Contact; Flying Dutchman). Members should note, preferably before purchasing the new issue, the current availability of Storyville 101 8430 *My People – The Complete Show*, reviewed in BL 19/4 (page 3). This includes everything on the earlier compilation and a lot more, and was put together by Ellington specialist and DESUK member Bjarne Busk. In my review I judged the Storyville CD 'a great advance on earlier issues'. For anyone interested in this music, that's the one to go for and not the Boplicity reissue of the earlier LP/CD.

RB

DUKE ELLINGTON OCTET

Squatty Roo SR-0216 (2014)

Satin Doll; Take The 'A' Train; Body and Soul; Mood Indigo; Killian's Lick; Passion Flower; Me And You; I'm Beginning To See The Light; It Don't Mean A Thing; Ocht O'Clock Rock; Satin Doll (theme)

The latest product from bootleg label Squatty Roo was purportedly recorded live on August 26, 1968, at Woodbridge, New Jersey, according to its sparse liner notes.

A surviving recording indeed exists from that concert, but the present CD is instead a partial reissue of TETCO 86801, the "Famed Fieldcup Concert" 1977 Canada LP, with June 1968 recordings from New York City's Rainbow Grill. The recordings are not airchecks, instead made at the Rainbow Grill, apparently with Ellington's permission.

The CD is not strictly a needle drop, since the first title, "Meditation", is absent, as is the opening 40 seconds of

"Killian's Lick", listed here as "Contrapuntal Riposte", as it was on the TETCO album. Moderate LP surface noise is evident, in addition to distortion introduced by the unknown CD engineer.

Those who own the TETCO album need not consider the present offering, particularly given its two omissions from that LP.

In Performance

THE BRATISLAVA HOT SERENADERS PLAY EARLY ELLINGTON

The Boisdale Canary Wharf, London, 19 July 2014

Most of you will not have heard of this Band - the BHS for short - but you really should have, as they have been playing early Ellington regularly and faithfully all over Europe for over twenty years. They are attracted by "period" music of the late 20s and, as well as Ellington, play, rather incongruously, Paul Whiteman, for which they add a string section and 5 singers. Their main attributes are that they really love what they are playing, are very schooled musicians, and are very enthusiastic and hard-working, an attribute which is familiar to me after having employed other guys from Eastern Europe in various capacities. They established an enthusiastic small "but beautifully marked" group of admirers in the UK after playing at the Whitley Bay Jazz Festival in 2002, 2004 and 2006. Their recent ten day tour of the UK was much overdue. Their leader and Artistic Director is Juraj Bartos, who is a world class trumpet player who plays in Symphony Orchestras and can play whatever he wants on trumpet. They need to be seen as well as heard to be fully appreciated - please see their many videos on Youtube.

In the concert at Canary Wharf they played the following Ellington numbers:

Cotton Club Stomp, the early 1929 recording which they have adopted as their signature tune, *The Creeper* (1926), *Sweet Jazz O'Mine*, *The Mooche* and *Old Man Blues*.

Cotton Club Stomp is one of Duke's clever masterpieces in which he relied almost entirely on soloists, with varying degrees of accompaniment by the band. The BHS have had to re-create the solos fairly closely otherwise it would not be *Cotton Club Stomp*. What I think has happened is that they have started by learning the solos exactly by heart, and then, because of the dozens of times they must have played it, made their own variations, sometimes (dare I say It) improving on the originals. To me their performances sound just like alternative takes to Duke's recording. Pavol Hod'a who plays Harry Carney's opening baritone solo wields his baritone like a clarinet, and when the same guy later plays Barney Bigard's two final clarinet choruses he wields his clarinet like a piccolo.

The Creeper is not often chosen by tribute bands. There were two takes by Duke, the second quite an improvement on the first. It was a *tour de force* for Otto Hardwick, then Duke's star saxophone soloist. Listening to the two takes you can hear how Otto develops and perfects his two solos. It shows he was a dexterous and inventive jazz soloist for 1926. It is an exciting fast tempo number with lots of breaks for everyone and other nice surprises, such as a few extra bars in the last chorus.

The BHS make the final trumpet/clarinet duet a real heated battle. The reeds also give us some delightful gentle humour when two of them draw their heads and saxophones together a couple of times for a little unison break they have. Their alto soloist Píala Zdeno reproduces Otto's solos in his own inimitable way.

Sweet Jazz O' Mine also had two takes by Duke which are very similar but such is the precision of the BHS that you can hear which take they have copied. It is a lively number also not often chosen by tribute bands, with a jaunty chorus, and a "sweet" verse which I believe the BHS found particularly attractive.

The Mooche was simply magnificent by the BHS. The sheer power and perfect harmony of the clarinet trio could not be improved on. I could feel it hit all the audience at the Boisdale. Juraj Bartos was like an amplified Bubba Miley.

Old Man Blues is often recreated but I believe the BHS do it best. It is not easy to do, but Juraj Bartos, for example, gets Freddy Jenkins's high note bit with ease, and the nice thing is you can watch his face while he is enjoying doing it.

The BHS reed section with a maximum of 3 saxophones produces as full a sound as I have heard from most 5 saxophone sections.

Given that nothing is ever perfect, I have two criticisms of the BHS. Firstly, on a few numbers they may sometimes set the tempo a little too fast (though this may be a personal opinion) and secondly, they only use a brass bass. He can certainly play four beats

to the bar even on the fast numbers when required, but there is sometimes no substitute for a driving string bass.

I believe a band as good as this can only be good for DESUK and encourage more people to become interested in Duke's music and to seek out societies such as ours to join. Looking round the Boisdale the young Saturday night crowd were hardly typical early Ellington fans, they just happened to be there that night, and from the standing ovation they gave I am sure some of them are ripe for recruitment.

Please all of you try and see this Band on Youtube. Some of the videos are ten or more years old and some not as good as others but there are a lot to see. There are for instance some recorded at a concert in Northern France in 2010 which are very good.

If any of you attended any of the other seven country-wide concerts they performed during July I would love to hear from you, simply to exchange opinions and notes on which tunes played etc. My email is roger.offord@talktalk.net

Roger Offord

HOT SUMMER DANCE

DESUK social meeting 9 August, Civil Service Club, London SW1

This was Roger Boyes' take on and around the Ellington dance date at USAF Mather base near Sacramento, California, on 22 July 1960. His music selection came from a variety of discs yet much of what Duke played that night was not on any of them, including the Strayhorn opener *Boo-dah*. Roger opted to play an April 1953 live performance featuring Ray, Jimmy, and Cat, describing it as "very much a dance-hall piece" possibly *A Train* in disguise.

Next was *Stardust*, three versions and three trumpet stars, Nance at Mather, Shorty three years earlier, and Clark Terry's Capitol of 1953. *Frisolious Banta* from Travis air force base dance date 1958, Jimmy Hamilton on tenor, was contrasted with the Capitol with Rick Henderson on alto, and then we had the real *A Train* from the real Mather dance. *Paris Blues* and the *Overture* from *Nutcracker* were pulled out by Duke at Mather practically coinciding with their first studio recordings in what Roger Boyes considered an "extraordinary" thing to do, and there was plenty of interplay between audience and presenter on *Such Sweet Thunder*, *Tenderly*, *Laura* and *Dance of the Floreadores*. Ellington for dancing? We couldn't get enough of it, and Roger should take this show on the road. **GS**

Treasurer's Report

Can you remember who was Prime Minister of the UK when DESUK increased its subscription fee from £18 to £20? Here is a clue: it was 2006. Since then we have had the banking crisis and two more Prime Ministers but DESUK's fee has remained the same £20. Since I took over from Derek Else in 2011 my annual recommendation to the Committee has been that in these straitened times it would be beneficial to retain it at this level believing that if we recruited more members and increased income from donations, the books could be balanced. But increases in the cost of postage and travel over the past three years have made it impossible to continue with this policy. The Committee have therefore accepted my recommendation that the fee for 2015 should be increased to £25.

Here is a financial forecast (below) to support my recommendation. The only allowance for changes or decisions that may affect our income and expenditure is an estimated 2% per annum increase in costs due to inflation.

DESUK Financial Forecast and Membership Report.

<u>CURRENT ACCOUNT</u>	<u>2013/14</u>	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>2015/16</u>	<u>2016/17</u>	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>2015/16</u>	<u>2016/17</u>
	<u>Including £5 Increase</u>				<u>Without £5 Increase</u>		
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Balance B/Fwd	2,238.00	425	1,423	772	425	818	-438
Payments Current Account	-5,184.00	-3,604	-3,676	-3,750	-3,604	-3,676	-3,750
Receipts, Current Account	3,371.00	4,602	3,025	3,025	3,997	2,420	2,420
	425	1,423	772	47	818	-438	-1,768
Transfer -to/+from Deposit Account	0	0	0	0	0	438	1,510
Current Account Closing Balance	425	1,423	772	47	818	0	-258

DEPOSIT ACCOUNT

Balance B/Fwd	1,498	1,500	1,502	1,504	1,504	1,506	1,508
Receipts Deposit Account	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Transfers To Current Account		0	0	0	0	-438	-1,510
Deposit Account Closing Balance	1,500	1,502	1,504	1,506	1,506	1,070	0

DESUK Membership

	Apr-14	Nov-14			
	Total	UK	Eur	O'seas	Total
Annual	132	102	15	15	132
Life	68	50	9	7	66
Special	14	2	1	8	11
	214	154	25	30	209

33% of our members are Life Members of whom 96% joined before the price of life membership was increased to £200 in 2009. In 1998 when Life Membership was introduced the fee was £75, the equivalent of 5 year's subscriptions meaning that since 2003 members joining that year have been in credit and have been so for 11 years. To date over 400 years of credit has accrued to Life members, an average of 6 years per life member. In value this is well in excess of any discount offered to subscribers to newspapers or magazines. As mentioned previously I tried to keep the annual membership fee down hoping that income from donations and new members would bridge any funding gap but this has not happened so I appeal to life members to donate something to help us to continue our efforts to maintain the quality of *Blue Light* and to function effectively as a Society. This would also help us to reduce the burden on our Annual Fee paying members who are currently contributing a disproportionate amount to DESUK's operational costs and enable us to offer a little more than we do at present. Maybe we could fund musical and educational projects and offer more on our web site. My forecast includes no spending of this nature.

Victor Lawrance, Treasurer

SHARING THE JOY

By Geoff Smith

Would you care to invite a couple or more of DESUK types to convert your home to Duke's Place for a day? I did on a sunny day in September 2014 and can heartedly recommend the idea. My companions plucked from the ether were committee members Quentin Bryar and Antony Pepper. Of course Duke, Strayhorn, and the gang, were present throughout on CD, LP, DVD, books, programmes, and various other bits of paper, artwork, reference works and general memorabilia, and a great time ensued for more than six hours.

Depending on the degree of formality adopted such an event could be described as a house group, mini-Ellington study group conference, or simply an all-embracing date with Duke. What counted this time was just the realisation of an old-fashioned get-together where all participants contributed music, literature, news, views, memories, knowledge and opinion. The house piano also joined in on *Frustration* but it was rather a case of fulfilment all round, satisfying and happy.

To give a flavour of proceedings, this is how the music side of it went: Inevitably, *A Train* kicked it off, this time a rousing full-band recording with Oscar Peterson soloing on full throttle after succeeding Duke at the piano (Pablo). A list scribbled afterwards has it that the session continued with *Diminuendo In Blue* (two versions), *Daybreak Express* with train sound effects on a Columbia "Listening In Depth" stereo demonstration LP, and contrasting LP and CD transfers of *Clarinet Lament*. The 30 minutes Nigel Kennedy exhaustive and rewarding *Mainly Black* 1986 interpretation with Alec Dankworth from *Black, Brown and Beige*, was lunch accompaniment, followed by a thought-to-be rare LP of 1940 Ellington broadcasts from the Hotel Sherman, Chicago.

The musical temperature was ramped up with *New York City Blues* (1947), and *Happy-Go-Lucky Local* and *Perdido* from *Piano In The Background*. A spate of profound and fun films on DVDs followed before portions of *A Drum Is A Woman* on LP and CD pressings. The latter included our Guildhall Band and Singers CD recorded at Ellington 2012, which stacked up well when various movements were compared with Duke's in 1956. "Exit" music was from *Blues In Orbit*.

Books and chronologies were consulted; CD notes, LP covers and photographs, drooled over. The end result: three happy and satiated Ellington men. In terms of participants, more bodies could have fitted in with perhaps up to a dozen enthusiasts finding the required groove. More than that might have involved

convoluted and unseemly verbal positioning for space and time.

As to preparation, when the soundings were made it was a case of bring what you like or nothing at all. The necessary solids and liquids were laid on and the Maestro himself directed proceedings from above with his usual aplomb. It was timeless joy; what could have been better?

The certainty is we will all be doing it again. Care to join us (serious invitation; let me know your willingness)? Better still, set something up at your Duke's Place and please include me in your invites. Not sure of your own local members? I'm sure our DESUK officials can help solve that one.

BLUE LIGHT Index – Volume 20

An index of main articles from the first issue of *Blue Light* is on the Society's website. Volumes 17/1 to 19/4 index is in volume 20/2 (Summer 2013) - **GS**

Volume 20/1 *Ellington At Newport: 3 July 1958* by Jack Gold and Dom Cerulli (from *Down Beat*, 7 August 1958); Ken Vail obit (Roger Boyes); *A Tale Of Two Woodes* (Goren Wallen); Dave And Duke (death of Dave Brubeck) (Geoff Smith); *In Search Of Fletcher Henderson* (Roger Boyes)

Volume 20/2 *Discovery Of Ellington's Film Debut* (Ken Steiner); *With Roger Boyes In His Den* (Geoff Smith); *Jerry Kruger, A Forgotten Ellington Singer* (Roger Boyes); *Boxing Clever, the Complete Columbia Studio Albums 1951-58* (Ian Bradley); *Duke: A Life* (How Ellington acquired his facial scar) (Terry Teachout)

Volume 20/3 *Putney Dandridge... Ellingtonian?* (Steven Lasker); *Dating Duke and Edna's Breakup – And The Infamous Slashing Incident* (Steven Lasker); *Duke's Itinerary* (David Palmquist)

Volume 20/4 *Tell Me It's The Truth: Terry Teachout's biography published* (Ian Bradley); *Ellington In Afghanistan* (Ian Bradley); Herb Jeffries celebrates 100th birthday; *Duke in Yorkshire* (Mike Vawdrey); Sathima Bea Benjamin obit (Roger Boyes); Marian McPartland obit (Roger Boyes); Dennis Dimmer obit (Wendy Lawrence); *Vic Bellerby* (Joan Bellerby); *Remembering Vic* (Roger Boyes); *Brubeck On Ellington* (transcript of the Dave Brubeck taped interview for Ellington 2012, Woking); *What To Leave Out* (Pete Long).

Draft MINUTES of the DESUK Committee Meeting

SATURDAY 19th JULY 2014 at the

Punch Tavern, 99 Fleet Street, London, EC4Y 1DE

Present: Peter Caswell (Chair), Chris Addison, Catherine Coates, Frank Harvey, Victor Lawrance, Antony Pepper, Geoff Smith

Guest: Mike Fletcher

Special note: Chairman spoke warmly of the unique contribution to and status within the society of our friend and associate DEREK ELSE, whose recent sad passing was then marked by the tribute of a minute's silence during which everyone stood, to honour his memory, prior to the commencement of the meeting.

1. Chairman's opening remarks (PC). The meeting started at 1.08pm. Chairman confirmed that Mike Fletcher would join the meeting around 2 pm to discuss item 7 on the Agenda.

2. Apologies: Ian Bradley, Phil Mead and Quentin Bryar.

3. Draft Minutes of 5th April 2014 and Matters Arising. The draft Minutes had already been circulated and were approved. **Matters arising:** (a) Collation and distribution of remainder BLs. GS explained the difficulties surrounding this issue. Spares amount to around 20/30 each time. He emphasised the need to archive them on an official basis and offered to take this on, once a proper plan is set in motion. (b) Number of committee members. (PC referred briefly to the related item 6 on the Agenda – frequency of committee meetings.) CA wondered about increased work load on individuals, should committee be reduced in size. He suggested reducing meetings from 4 to 3 p.a. VL felt that complicated matters needed the wider number of people. FH said it would be better to reduce the number of meetings but at the next post-AGM meeting. With a new secretary, treasurer and chairman being needed next year, PC felt now was not the time to make changes. AP was concerned that if we leave all the discussion till then, an opportunity to restructure would be missed. He suggested the matter be kept under review, GS proposed it as an ongoing agenda item and so, under the title of "Committee Structure", this was agreed.

4. Draft Minutes of 2014 AGM. These were noted, to be submitted for approval to the 2015 AGM.

5. Officers' Reports.

(a) Treasurer's Report (VL). VL warned that finances of the society, while not desperate at present, needed to be very carefully monitored for future viability. The increase in subscription approved at the 2014 AGM would help, but new members and other ways of increasing income were essential. A discussion ensued, with members giving their viewpoint. GS wanted to reassure VL that the vote in Amsterdam on the annual subscription was democratic; there had even been a feeling that the increase could have been more. VL reiterated members did not necessarily need to be at AGMs, but best practice stated we should have as much input from members as possible and an increase in subscription was a matter for all. AP agreed these points were valid and proposed PC could explain the matter in BL.

PC summarised there is a consensus that we do not need a consultation with our members but the point about best practice is well made. He suggested VL do a piece for BL on this and VL agreed.

(b) Membership Secretary's Report (VL). Late payers – VL is relatively confident 4/5 of these will pay up. PC asked committee to help chase up anyone known to them. Membership stands at around 204.

(c) Blue Light Editor's Report (IB). It was agreed that the 'copy deadline' issue was a policy matter for the editor. The idea of a 'Wanted/For Sale' column – Committee generally in favour of this. GS suggested a small donation to the society could be made; this was favourably received. GS will discuss the matter with IB. *At this point, Mike Fletcher joined the meeting.*

(d) Vice Chair's Report (GS). GS said much had already been discussed. He suggested a standing item on the agenda – "The Future of the Society". AP/GS have discussed a BL subscription (separate from DESUK membership). AP/GS and IB will discuss this further. PC stressed any subscription *must* be more than the 2015 membership of £25. About 40 "A Drum is a Woman" CDs are left; we are in profit.

(e) Publicity Report (CA). CA suggested he send an email giving brief information on what is in the latest issue of BL. A single issue price would be necessary. This idea was made with approval; GS said he would ask IB to put on the cover of BL "single issue available £?". GS suggested CA check each issue of BL to contact anyone whose name appears and who is not a member, with a copy of the relevant issue together with an invitation to join. VL asked CA to put something together and email everyone. PC thanked CA for his excellent work.

(f) Meetings organiser/Website (AP). Nothing to report on website. London meetings ongoing. Likelihood of combined AGM/concert for next year. PC congratulated AP on the organisation of the 2013 AGM at Pizza Express and hoped he could do the same again. AP felt that the future of the society rested on doing more live music, with the attempt to not lose money on this. The society should put on some kind of event in November this year.

6. Recommendation on Constitutional Change - This was deferred to next meeting (1st November).

7. Tony Faulkner archive (MF) MF explained the nature of the task, referring to the note already circulated. There are handwritten scores – they are not performance scores. TF has sent MF a CD with complete parts. MF pointed out that not all of the material is copyright to TF. Options for dealing with requests were discussed. MF suggested that the society should be contacted if a copy of material was requested. A fee is paid; once this has been done, a copy is sent. MF would provide a list of what is available. GS suggested a free ad in BL listing what is available; copies can be made in the order requested. PC moved approval for what is being proposed by MF. This was agreed. PC further proposed that for the immediate short term, we agree that MF has *carte blanche* but should report back. GS asked MF to write an article for BL describing the situation. PC thanked MF for coming and for taking on the archive.

8. A.O.B.

(a) Frank Griffith Nonet. PC will respond to this request for funding support.

(b) Ellington 2016 – NYC. PC has been in touch with the organisers and put them in contact with IB.

9. Date/Venue Next Meeting: 12 noon Saturday 1st November.

Venue: Civil Service Club, 13-15 Great Scotland Yard, London SW1A 2HJ.

The meeting was declared closed at 3.15m.

C Coates

16 October 2014

