

BLUE LIGHT

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Please check the address label on your envelope for this edition of *Blue Light*. If there is any inaccuracy please notify us as soon as possible by email to rogaboyes@waitrose.com or by post to Roger Boyes, 9 Chester Place, Great Barton, IP31 2TL.

You should have received your copy of the spring and summer issues, Volume 22 numbers 1 and 2, earlier in the year, and number 3, the Billy Strayhorn special issue, towards the end of September. If you have not received any of the four, please let us know via Roger Boyes, as above.

If you have joined only recently, please note that your calendar year subscription for 2015 entitles you to *all four* issues of *Blue Light* which are dated 2015, including the ones published earlier in the year, before you joined.

Editorial: From The Chairman

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Membership Renewal for 2016

Annual membership expires at the end of the year, and you are now invited to renew your subscription for the coming calendar year, 2016.

We hope you have found much that is interesting and enjoyable in all four issues of *Blue Light* and we wish you all the best for Christmas and the coming year.

DESUK Committee

Editor Ian Bradley has kindly made his Editorial page available to me to pass on some good news about our Society and our financing. Firstly, though, I am using this opportunity to thank Ian surely on behalf of us all for the quite superb Billy Strayhorn centennial *Blue Light* of Autumn 2015. The decision to expand to 32 pages and print on top quality glossy paper on this occasion was totally justified and a large number of compliments have come in. Be sure to preserve your copy as this issue has effectively sold out and already become a sought-after collectors' item.

Life members of DESUK received with their copy a letter from me co-signed by Treasurer Grant Elliot. The wording was also devised in part and approved of by several designated members of the Committee following a decision by the entire Committee at its previous meeting.

As you probably know, our finances have been precarious for some time. If nothing was done we could not have continued for more than a year or so. It had been identified that annual membership payers have been effectively subsidising our collective "lifers" for many years. I am pleased to report that the letter has had its desired effect; we should now remain solvent if we can keep our future membership fee income and outgoing costs in balance - primarily for *Blue Light* production and distribution, but also for projects, meetings, the committee, and our music archive and education responsibilities.

We asked life members to revert to paying an annual subscription, effectively ending their life membership designation. Those who chose not to do so would remain life members but would no longer receive their *Blue Light*. All but less than a handful of life members were very much "in profit". By December 2014 considerably more than 400 years of "credit" had accrued to life members, an average of six years credit ("profit") per life member, in other words averaging £120 for each life member at the then annual subscription rate. Most certainly, our Society was in dire need of their renewed regular and reliable financial support.

I can now report that a third of life members have responded at the time of writing and the letter has been received positively and with understanding. Also, I asked "lifers" to consider making a donation and this has brought in £1,125 so far. Many thanks to all who have responded; the Treasurer will acknowledge these generous gifts as appropriate in the journal. (*Hint: Donations from members are always welcome; many add them to annual membership payments.*) All but one respondent so far has accepted the point of the letter and assured us they will start paying the current £25 annual membership fee, due now for 2016. (The one exception, a much valued member, replied that she was delighted to be a life member but no longer wished to receive our journal).

As I reminded life members, our present Constitution (May 2012) states: "A quarterly newsletter will be circulated to members". The Committee plans to submit a new Constitution to the 2016 AGM likely to state that a quarterly journal will be produced and distributed to annually paying members and to non-member subscribers, with surplus copies, if any, of individual issues to be made available for sale separately at a price to be determined by the journal's editor.

If as a life member you have not yet responded to the letter, please consider doing so either to the Treasurer, Grant Elliot, or myself. Contact details are on Page 2.

Thanks for your attention. "And now" (Duke's customary link between numbers), on with the show.

Geoff Smith

Forum

Dear Editor

One of the things I appreciate about the *Blue Light* record reviews is that, unlike *Jazz Journal*, attempts are usually made to compare different reissues to the same material.

However, in his review of the Avid set (*BL* 22/2), I do think Roger Boyes should have mentioned the bad distortion which afflicts several of the tracks from this period on the red box Centennial Edition. BMG failed to correct the faults on their subsequent *Never No Lament* set and the single *Very Best Of...* compilation, leaving me to regret disposing of my Blanton-Webster set from 1986.

The sound on the Avid set has a number of other merits, but in my view the absence of distortion alone makes it a clear first choice for this material.

On a separate issue, I disagree with you about the famous Clark Terry quote surfacing previously on the 1943 WBC transcriptions of *Blue Skies*. Yes, Rex Stewart makes a few noises in frustration or exasperation at the breakdowns, but to me they do not sound like structured phrases.

Please do not interpret this letter as in any way carping or complaining, as since joining the Society, I have found the Journal to be a fascinating and thought-provoking read.

Yours sincerely

Tony Charlton

Dear Editor

In his article '*But This One Was Special*' (Spring 2015) Roger Boyes wrote about the discovery of Pete Ford's jazz collection.

Pete was a frequent visitor to my home in the 1990s. He had become very good friends with Dennis Dimmer who lived for many years with my partner and me in Salisbury. Pete and Dennis had a great deal in common, not least their appreciation of and dedication to the music of Duke Ellington. As Roger mentioned, both were founder members of DESUK, their membership numbers being 14 and 15 (mine was 16).

Pete was an ideal guest and my lasting memory is of him always moving his spectacles onto his forehead in order to read sleeve notes! More importantly though, he borrowed a copy of the extremely rare '*Boom Jackie Boom Chick*' from his local library (imagine!) and was kind enough to make a copy on cassette for me. It was some time before I was fortunate enough to buy my own copy of the LP.

Some months after reading Roger's article I was carrying out a review of the contents of numerous



boxes that have accumulated in my attic and came across this photo of Peter (above). It shows him with Dennis (centre) and Brian Priestley (right) at Ellington '90 in Ottawa. Happy days.

Kind regards,

Wendy Lawrence
(formerly Heuston)

Dear Editor

Membran in Germany have issued a box set called *The Best of the Big Bands, Classics from the 1950's*. There is one true Duke item in it, *Duke Ellington's Spacemen: The Cosmic Scene*, 10 tracks, missing the second take of *Jones*. But two items amongst the other 19 albums on this 10 CD set are Clark Terry *Duke With a Difference* and Billy Taylor's LP *Taylor Made Jazz*. The Clark Terry item as a single CD is on the net for around the same price as the set £11 but the Billy Taylor is on at £106... Both items are listed in the back of Timner and both show of Duke's main soloist Hodge, Gonsalves etc. The recording dates in Timner are Clark Terry 29 July and 6 September 1957; the Billy Taylor session is dated 17 November 1957. The set also includes recordings by Louie Bellson, Pete Rugolo, Dizzy Gillespie's *A Portrait Of Duke*, (Just listening to a nice version of *Come Sunday* on the Clark Terry disc as I write this). I think DESUK members should be told this is around. Just checked and found Billy Strayhorn on two tracks of the Clark Terry disc.

Merry Christmas

Ray Hunter

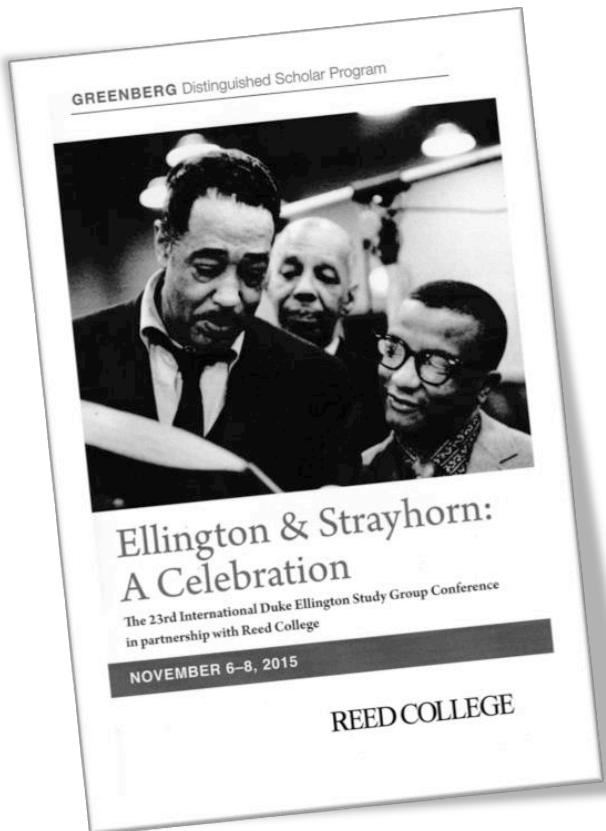


ELLINGTON 2015

Ellington and Strayhorn: A Celebration

Portland, Oregon, 6 – 8 November

A Chronological Overview by Geoff Smith



Thanks to their few minutes' fortuitous delay, I arrived in time to hand over the Eddie Lambert gavel to David Schiff to officially open the conference held in partnership with Reed College. Much joy, innovation and revelation then ensued and continued through the weekend. Gratifyingly, the DESUK logo was printed with Reed's in the programme to recognise my personal involvement in widening out the venture.

Celebrating the centennial of Billy's birth, this was a new departure for the conferences, which stretch back to Washington DC in 1983. The entire event was paid for by the host college and its Greenberg Distinguished Scholar Program; sessions and concerts were available to all free of charge. Registration for planning purposes was requested but not insisted upon, and that had the result that the various campus venues for the conference sessions were always comfortably filled.

With the headline concert in the Kaul Auditorium demand exceeded expectation. An audience of around 500 was expected but 750 turned up,

delighting the college hierarchy as it could well have been the best concert hall attendance in Reed's 104 years' existence. Perhaps also it was the largest gathering yet for one of the now 23 Ellington conferences. Does anyone know?

Every minute of the Celebration was worthwhile for this transatlantic enthusiast. I was fortunate too in having a musical intro beforehand up the road in Seattle with a quartet of distinguished delegates and the Seattle Repertory Jazz Orchestra. Equally, afterwards I was able to attend an Oregon Symphony Orchestra concert in Portland featuring a composition by David Schiff himself.

Schiff, R.P. Wollenberg Professor of Music at Reed and author of *The Ellington Century* (University of California Press, 2012), explained in his opening address that he had originally proposed a small gathering of Pacific Northwest presenters who had appeared with him at Ellington 2012 Woking, and 2014 Amsterdam. This became the 23rd International to recognise that presenters and delegates were joining in from Europe and Canada.

The keynote presentation, *After All, Strayhorn Studies in the 21st Century*, was by Amsterdam co-organiser Walter van de Leur, a revisit of issues in his Strayhorn book *Something To Live For* (Oxford, 2002). He addressed how scholars can be biased especially when they consider there has to be a hierarchy when two composers are involved.

Dramatically, he produced the Strayhorn original score of *Take the A Train*, kept down the decades in Billy's apartment and only just released by the family. Many believed this was a collaborative effort with Duke yet the score proved otherwise. Next day, he reprised his Amsterdam talk on *Ellington and Notation* and his memorable score dissection of the "run-of-the-mill" *I Never Felt This Way Before* (1940).

Amid whoops and hollers from the near-capacity concert crowd for David Schiff's welcome to us all "from all over", star conference pianist Matt Cooper opened the concert with his mesmeric Duke recreations and his own masterly interpretations of them, starting with *Mood Indigo* out of tempo. Matt had them gripped from then on. Roars of approval ensued from the hundreds of fans, all of whom were

patently knowledgeable music lovers. They seemed eager to engage with all of the performers, standing ovations, cheers, and whistles becoming the norm during the evening.

Chamber music clarinettist David Schifrin joined jazz pianist and composer Darrell Grant for Schiff's arrangements of a suite of four Ellington pieces, *Clarinet Lament* (Bigard), *Air Conditioned Jungle* (Hamilton), *Heaven (Sacred)*, and *Kinda Dukish/Rocking in Rhythm*. To me, *Heaven* came across as slightly bombastic, and none the worse for that, but the recomposed out-of-tempo piece was entirely in keeping with Duke's approach to the sacred concerts. On *Kinda*, Grant had the strong left hand and great ducal licks off pat, receiving well-deserved applause mid-piece, and Schifrin in turn made like the entire sax section. The audience was well turned on for the finale, Rebecca Kilgore singing for the first time with Darrell Grant as a duo ("two Portland jazz legends performing together for the first time" – Schiff). Everyone was upstanding at the end of this set, with its flawless vocals from Kilgore, who stood there and delivered from Ivie's and Billy's repertoire and replicated the dramatic violence of *Strange Feeling (Perfume Suite)* persuasively, a very ambitious thing to attempt for a lady with such a beautifully lilting and swinging voice. Before *Checking Out, Goombye*, she captivated me with *Lotus Blossom* sung to lyrics written in the 1970s.

Lisa Barg (Montreal) opened up on Saturday with *Invisibility Blues: Searching for Strayhorn in the 21st Century*. Her paper on Billy's legacy and "narratives of invisibility, marginalization, and absence" will be featured in a future *Blue Light*. Next was Italian Luca Bragolini with another example of his musicological detective work – *Harlem* the piece being traced "note for note" by him to Duke playing in a party recorded in 1949. This was a year before a *DownBeat* story on six composers including Ellington being asked to collaborate on a portrait of New York which led to the official birth of the familiar composition. Bragolini took us through three dozen Ellington compositions related to Duke's *Harlem: Sounds From the Big Court* between 1926 and 1940, and again we are hoping to include his paper in a future *BL*.

Carl Woideck (University of Oregon) is another conference regular known for unearthing interesting facets on Duke, this time presenting *Pseudo-African or African? Ellington in Dakar, 1966*. On his first trip to Africa to take part in the Premier Festival des Arts Negres in Dakar Duke declared he composed pseudo-African music which would have to be imitation. By the tour end, and in *Music Is My Mistress*, he called himself a writer of simply

African music. Woideck, using plenty of audio, took us through the reasons why or, Ellington being Ellington, the possible reasons why. It is hoped his paper, too, will appear in *Blue Light*.

Willie Ruff (Yale University), musician, professor, writer, and raconteur extraordinaire, was a huge bonus. Check his credentials in his riveting piece in *BL 22/3* (Autumn 2015) on how Strayhorn composed *Suite for Horn and Piano* for him and pianist partner Dwike Mitchell. He told of his foundation of the Duke Ellington Fellowship at Yale in 1972, inaugurating *The Conservatory Without Walls*, and showed newly-discovered TV programmes of the university's presentation of Ellington medals to jazz greats, the first medal going to Duke himself.

In Amsterdam and in common with other presenters, David Schiff received the chop for going over time. This meant that his concluding link, or leap, in *Going South?* between the *Deep South Suite* (1946) and *New Orleans Suite* (1970) was never made. This time it was. You can read about the "dystopic, myth-breaking musical landscape" substantive first part in *Blue Light 21/2* Summer 2014 (pages 5 and 6) and 21/3 Autumn 2014 (Schiff's complete paper). Now he elaborated on the 1970 suite being seen as the opposite - Utopian and celebratory in the manner of transcending conflict as in the "late styles" of Shakespeare and Beethoven. Illustrations were *Blues For New Orleans* and *Portrait of Mahalia Jackson*.

Matt Cooper (Eastern Oregon University) wrapped up Saturday at the piano and lectern in typical great form with more transcribed excerpts and analyses of Ellington solos from the 1920s to 1960s in *The Piano Player in the Band*. How many times must it be said that Matt is a Marvel? See him and believe it.

The end of the conference was truly something else. More than 100 had registered for it and a large proportion showed up for four meaty sets aimed at solid Duke lovers - total commitment, no compromise. Reed College set us up with a full range of pastries, breakfast fruits and cereals, coffee, and smoothie fruit drinks as I think they are called, all part of the much appreciated free-to-all-comers deal. For the initial verbal thrusts we had a short introductory chat from me in the chair on the Billy-Duke relationship as garnered from the earlier sessions. *BL* Editor Ian Bradley's editorial piece on the Pittsburgh dressing-room meeting (in 22/3) was circulated and read out in part at the start.

David Schiff then spoke of two musical geniuses working together: "In general in works of art we don't have a category for collaboration. Yet music is essentially collaborative so the challenge is to

develop conceptually the idea that geniuses can collaborate collectively." Then it was on with the old hands.

Steven Lasker presented *New Discoveries and Rarities of Early Vintages* selected from his world-class collection of Ellington 78s. He opened with Harvey Brooks playing a flashy stride piano solo on *Nobody's Sweetheart* from a very rare record on the Hollywood label that dates from early 1924. Duke recalled he got serious about playing piano in the mid-teens after hearing Brooks: "He was swinging, and he had a tremendous left hand, and when I got home I had a real yearning to play." This was followed by a coupling from November 1924 by Jo. Trent and the D C'ns/Sunny [Sonny Greer] and the D C'ns which featured Ellington's earliest stride solos. This was freshly transferred from the only known copy of the original Blu-Disc 78. A coupling by singer Bert Lewis from spring 1925 accompanied by a pianist who may well be Duke followed (you can read about this rare record, and hear it too, at: <http://www.vjm.biz/unknown-1925-dukeellington.html>). Steven then played an unpublished and discographically-unlisted Cotton Club broadcast from spring 1937 which featured complete versions of *I've Got to Be a Rug Cutter* and *Azure*, as well as partial versions of *Swing Low* and *Ducky Wucky*. We then listened to the complete soundtrack of the 1941 short *Hot Chocolate* (aka *Cotton Tail*) with a four-bar piano intro that was new to us. (The source was a disk cut as a "ref" for Soundie producer Sam Coslow.) A four-and-one-half minute version of *Chelsea Bridge* from 20 February 1941 followed. First issued in 2004 on a Bluebird DVD/CD set, it was heard here in better sound. Steven concluded his presentation with *Charlotte Russe* from fall 1947, a fox-trot as played by a Johnny Hodges small group with Billy Strayhorn and Oscar Pettiford. (We usually hear this piece, written by Strayhorn, played as a waltz under the title *Lotus Blossom*.)

The Goal Was Impact: Duke Ellington's Radio Shows was Ken Steiner's (Seattle) presentation, based on his introductory article in the liner notes for the new *Treasury Shows, Volume 20* double CD from Storyville (DETS 903 9020). He drew attention to the "spontaneity, energy, and relaxed manner" of the band on radio and to Duke's fortunate accident of birth that placed him in 1923 NYC, the right place at the right time to make the most of the new medium. Ken played *Second Portrait of the Lion* and *Raincheck* from a broadcast from Trianon Ballroom, Southgate, California (May or June 1941) and *Strange Love* and *Johnny Come Lately* (1 June 1946) from the new DETS compilation. He is expanding his article for publication in *BL* but I suggest you

buy the CDs for his liner notes on individual tracks as well of course as for the music itself.

David Palmquist (Delta BC, Canada) commanded his audience's attention with his *Recent Discoveries While Chronicling Duke's Travels* for The Duke Where And When (TDWAW) website. Almost every day brings in new findings but, as David constantly points out, the task will never be completed. This time he concentrated on the 1963 US State Department tour using maps and a laser pointer to bring it alive and get the drama across.

All that then remained was my *Not Around Much Any More* presentation of selections from the Stockpile by Louis Tavecchio (Netherlands) and myself, made in Louis' home a few days beforehand. The studio quality examples played were from a set of recordings acquired by Louis in 2012 of masters which were lodged with Danish Radio. Much of the material was broadcast but it was not publicly issued. We heard Duke speaking about his stockpile (17 March 1970, Toronto), and his tribute to Billy Strayhorn (1967, for the *On The Road With Duke* TV documentary). Piano music included *Chromatic Love Affair* (1 April 1966, LA), *Melancholia* (25 August 1972, NYC), *Lotus Blossom* (same date), and *I Didn't Know About You* (Duke majestic and mesmeric behind vocalist Anita Moore, same date). Band selections included *C Jam Blues* (January 1957, Chicago, with laidback Terry and Gonsalves), *EGGO* (4 April 1967 NYC, with an angry Duke telling an intruder to get out), *Little Purple Flower* (same date, a rehearsal take with Duke experimenting with sonorities), and *Short Sheet Cluster* (18 March 1957 Chicago, Louis' choice of "very special music showing how Duke managed a recording session with everyone getting twisted up and Duke not minding at all").

I reported Louis' view: "Ellington was invariably well prepared when he went into the studios for these recordings but liked to indulge himself and improvise with the orchestra, often at length. Importantly, he always had charts on hand".

Bringing down the gavel to the rhythm of *C Jam*, Schiff ended proceedings by saying that in his opinion this had been the best session of the conference. Perhaps not the most politically correct of comments but greatly appreciated by all of us delegates and presenters who had stayed the entire course. Yo'Schiff!

BLUE LIGHT BINDERS

A small quantity of *Blue Light Binders* in excellent condition have been discovered. The price is £7.50 each plus postage at cost. Due to the small quantity remaining these are offered on a first come first served basis. Email Mike Coates: MBigwidge@aol.com

Piano Reflections: Part One

By Matthew J. Cooper



Duke Ellington's monumental output as a composer, arranger, and bandleader have by now been well recognized. Unfortunately, Duke's contributions as a pianist have been somewhat overshadowed. This may be partly due to his own modesty about his skills as the "new, young, apprentice piano player," and partly due to what Alan Walker says is the irrational judgment of "the great public"; as Walker says, "it has never been able to accept that a person may do more than one thing supremely well." Nor did Ellington follow the norm of the "virtuoso" in the style of Art Tatum, Teddy Wilson, or Bud Powell; he did not seek to impress the listener with flowing right hand lines or lightning speed. Instead, with his harmonic originality and firm percussive touch, he is more aligned with individualist composer/performers such as Thelonious Monk. As Louis Tavecchio says: "Ellington was not the most dexterous pianist, but his inherent musicality makes him one of the most fascinating. In terms of musical rather than digital virtuosity, he is unexcelled."

Despite a tendency to eschew virtuosity for its own sake, Ellington's original harmonic voicings, percussive and sonorous touch, and superb introductions and accompaniments rightly put him in the forefront of innovative jazz pianists. He has influenced a small but significant school of modern pianists, notably Thelonious Monk and Cecil Taylor, and his piano work continues to draw praise and tribute from contemporary musicians such as Ethan Iverson, Norah Jones and Terri Lynne Carrington (whose remake of the *Money Jungle* album won a Grammy in 2013).

Ellington "really understood what Monk was doing," in Ray Nance's famous anecdote from 1948 in which Ellington, upon first hearing Monk's recordings, said: "Sounds like he's stealing some of my stuff." Monk admired Ellington as well—as is demonstrated in his 1955 album *Thelonious Monk Plays Duke Ellington*. Subsequent encounters in the 1960s and 70s, including Monk's guest appearance with the Ellington band at Newport in 1962 (including a Strayhorn arrangement of *Monk's Dream*) document their mutual

admiration. And one need only hear Duke's dissonant minor-ninth chords on *Amad* from *The Far East Suite* (1966) to sense the harmonic kinship with Cecil Taylor, who has said that he "never would have thought of playing the piano without thinking it out along Ellington's lines, and that's the base." In fact, Duke's earlier "avant-garde" recording of Gershwin's *Summertime* from *Piano in the Foreground* (1961)--which features violent minor-ninth stabs and ends in an angry, dissonant tone cluster--has been aptly compared to Taylor's work.

After listening to something as modern sounding as *Summertime*, it's truly amazing to consider that Ellington--after all a product of his times--began as a ragtime and stride pianist. He reached the height of his powers in this idiom during the period between 1924 and 1932. Although he showed no exceptional talent during his childhood piano lessons with Marietta Clinkscales, he credited that early experience with giving him a preference for the piano's low register, which he called "the umpy-dump bottom." He began to study in earnest during his teens by hanging out in pool rooms, observing and emulating the styles of pianists such as Claude Hopkins, Gertie Brown, and Oliver "Doc" Perry—the latter of whom gave him lessons in harmony and note-reading. One summer before entering high school, on the way back from a summer with his mother Daisy in Asbury Park, N.J., an older friend known as Bowser took him to Philadelphia to hear pianist Harvey Brooks. As Ellington relates in his memoir, *Music Is My Mistress*, "He was swinging, and he had a tremendous left hand, and when I got home I had a real yearning to play. I hadn't been able to get off the ground before, but after hearing him I said to myself, 'Man, you're just going to *have* to do it.'" Burning with inspiration after hearing Brooks, he composed his first piano piece, *Soda Fountain Rag* (aka *Poodle Dog Rag*, after the soda fountain where he worked) around 1914, but the earliest complete recording is one from a broadcast of the "Saturday Night Swing Club" in 1937, where he gives it the title *Swing Session* (*Duke Ellington at the Cotton Club*, Storyville 1038415). The opening strain also appears as a solo in the 1929 *Oklahoma Stomp* by The Six Jolly Jesters, and Duke returned to performances of the piece under its original title as late as 1972 (*Live At The Whitney*, Impulse IMPD-173). Another early piano composition, "Bitches' Ball," probably dates from around the same time, and Ellington revealed later that the stride solo from the *Beige* movement of the original 1943 version of *Black, Brown and Beige* derives from this earlier piece.

Another older friend, a drummer named Percy "Brushes" Johnson, introduced Ellington to the piano rolls of the "Father of Stride Piano," James P. Johnson (1891-1955). As Ellington recounts in his memoir,

Johnson "slowed the mechanism down so that I could see which keys on the piano were going down as I digested Johnson's wonderful sounds." After daily practising along with Johnson's virtuosic *Carolina Shout*, Duke said he "really had it perfect," and he and "Brushes" were soon making the rounds showing off his prowess. When James P. Johnson himself concertized in Washington in 1921, Duke's friends convinced him to get on the bandstand and play it for him; Johnson applauded Duke's version, and the two went on a tour of all the local "joints" which lasted until 10:00 the next morning. Ellington said he didn't play any more that night, but only watched Johnson: "What I absorbed on that occasion might, I think, have constituted a whole semester in a conservatory." Corroborating Duke's account of his mastery of this piece, Sonny Greer later said Ellington was "the only one who could play *Carolina Shout* equally well."

Ellington not only befriended and was mentored by Johnson, but upon moving to New York in 1923 he established similar relationships with Thomas "Fats" Waller and Willie "The Lion" Smith. Ellington and Smith became lifelong friends and mutual admirers; among other qualities, Ellington noted in Smith's playing the quality musicians call "groove" ("everything and everybody seemed to be doing whatever they were doing in the tempo the Lion's group was laying down"). He also noted the Lion's masterful abilities as an accompanist: as Duke put it, the Lion could accompany chorus after chorus, crafting accompaniments that "fit like a glove," always different and always propelling the soloist forward. Ellington took these lessons to heart as he—along with Count Basie —pioneered jazz piano accompaniment styles from the 1930s forward, and Ellington's mastery as an accompanist has been noted by many: Dizzy Gillespie called him "the best compoer in the world."

Although Duke's mid-20s piano solos have been criticized by Gunther Schuller as a "sloppy, helter-skelter sort of party piano," others including Mark Tucker find a musician gradually developing his own style. Tucker notes the use of development, rather than just strung-together phrases, in *Georgia Grind* (1926), and recent discoveries by Steven Lasker document masterful stride playing from as early as 1924. Lasker's presentation during the 23rd International Duke Ellington Study Group Conference at Reed College in Portland, "New Discoveries and Rarities of Early Vintages," revealed through an airing of rare 78 recordings that Duke was fully in command of the stride idiom when he recorded six sides in November 1924 for the Blu-Disc label. In particular, two tracks recorded with an early Ellington sextet billed as the D C'Ns—the first, *Deacon Jazz*, featuring Jo Trent on vocal and the second, *Oh How I Love My Darling* featuring Sonny (here spelled "Sunny") Greer—

document Ellington taking blistering, two-handed stride choruses, masterfully executed and loaded with exciting syncopations. Although Schuller accused Duke of rushing on some of the early recordings, there is no hint of that here.

By 1928, Ellington was fully ready for his debut as an unaccompanied solo pianist. Johnson and Smith's stride piano influences can be easily heard on Ellington's first two unaccompanied recordings from October 1st, 1928, the piano rag *Swampy River* and the solo version of the band number *Black Beauty*. *Swampy River*, which was published in sheet music form in 1934 in a version virtually identical version to the recording, has been discussed by Marcello Piras in the recent *Cambridge Companion to Duke Ellington* (and I am indebted to him for sharing with me the rare sheet music version). It features a Habanera or "Spanish tinge" type second theme, and a spritely third theme with a "cowboy bass" figure strongly reminiscent of The Lion. Whilst paying tribute to his mentors, Duke's bass figure in the 17th and 18th measure also uncannily foreshadows Thelonious Monk and Kenny Clarke's iconic bebop theme, *Epistrophy*, penned in 1941 and first recorded in 1942 by none other than Cootie Williams.

The solo version of *Black Beauty* (originally titled *Firewater*)—the band version of which has been discussed by Piras, and the piano version by Bill Dobbins in the *Cambridge Companion*—follows a similar form to the ensemble version, yet stands quite on its own. It features an Impressionistic arpeggio introduction; bluesy right hand pitch bends; broken-tenth stride patterns alternating with passages of simple block chords in the left hand; whole-tone scale runs; and Gospel-like cadential chords. As Dobbins points out, the whole-tone scale runs resemble later ones by Monk — though in Monk's case they are typically descending, rather than ascending.

Anyone who is in doubt about Ellington's ability to exhibit pianistic virtuosity it was called for should listen to his stride showpiece *Lot o' Fingers* (aka *Fast and Furious*). (At the Reed College conference, Steven Lasker pointed out that the original title omitted the s in "lots", and that original alternate title was *Harlem Manicurist*—as in "cutting session.") *Lot o' Fingers* was recorded in 1932 at the incredible tempo of 288 beats per minute; Jacques Réda called this piece his "ultimate homage and farewell" to the stride style. After this time however, Ellington increasingly devoted his time to composition, leading the band, and touring; consequently, he was unable to practice enough to consistently maintain this level of technical brilliance. However, his early stride period continued to resurface in his later playing—not only in the numerous breakout solo passages such as *Cotton Tail* or *Pitter Panther Patter* (1940), or in the many high

treble interjections (similar to Basie's "plinks and planks"), but also in more subtle ways. Active and widely-compassed left hand figures, percussive thrusts, and James P. Johnson-like cross-rhythms rear their heads in the 1953 version of *Kinda Dukish* (from *Piano Reflections*), and even in the starkly modernist sounds of *Money Jungle* (1962).

During the 1930s through 1950s, Ellington's piano style matured and consolidated into what could be called "mainstream," while still including forays into the into what could be considered "avant-garde." Rhythm section techniques that are nowadays considered standard practice, such as "comping" or "laying out" (rather than playing stride or two-handed "boom-chick" accompaniment patterns) during an ensemble passage or horn solo, were tried out by Ellington as early as the mid-30s. During this time frame, band pianists generally hewed to a few tried-and-true accompaniment techniques. These included stride patterns; a stride pattern divided into left and right hand in a "boom-chick" manner; and doubling the horn parts. However, with the emergence of bassists such as Walter Page (in the Bennie Moten and Count Basie bands between 1928 and 1949) and Jimmie Blanton in the Ellington band (during 1939-41)—bassists who could not only lay down strong root notes on the first and third beats of the measure, but who could improvise intricate countermelodies or "walk" bass lines on all four beats—rhythm sections were due for a style change. A smoother, more equal emphasis on all four beats became the norm in the Swing era, rather than the stiff two-beat feel of ragtime and early jazz. This necessitated new ways for the pianist to function in the rhythm section—a way to provide harmonic rhythmic support, a way that would swing and yet not add clutter. Of all the 1930s band pianists, it was Basie and Ellington who led the way in inventing accompaniment techniques which became standardized during the 1940s, and which are known nowadays as "comping."

In my next installment, I'll look at Ellington's post-stride styles, starting with the 30s, moving into the Ellington-Blanton duets of 1940, and beyond into the years of collaboration with important voices such as Strayhorn, Webster, and Hodges. During this middle time period (the 1930s—50s), he primarily consolidated and solidified his style — while still occasionally reaching into his stride "bag of tricks" and simultaneously experimenting with modern harmonies. He also mastered the art of band accompaniment; turned out many and varied introductions and endings; and produced polished masterpieces (including many "Impressionistic" gems) which are represented in albums like 1953's *Piano Reflections*.

Review



Acres of virtual newsprint were covered on-line over the summer with news that recordings were to be released from a 'lost' session by Duke Ellington made at the studio of German record producer Conny Plank.

The excitement generated amongst a young generation of music critics was more likely to be down to Plank's name being on the time sheets as much as Ellington's. A review by Ron Hart for the website *Pitchfork* gushes:

"When Ellington entered Rhenus Studio (Köln) in the summer of 1970, the story goes that his goal was to use the space to record some stock material for later use. He didn't realize that he was working with one of pop music's bold visionaries. In hindsight, it's a meeting as monumental as such fabled unions as Prince and Miles Davis or Keith Richards and Gram Parsons; the kind of gigs music nerds book in their heads. Only, for this one there's hard evidence of its existence, a coming together of a great American icon and an adventurous young soundman from Deutschland that's as beautiful as it is unorthodox."

How myopic of Ellington not to realise the august company he was keeping! We need the perspective of a much more seasoned critic to see the session for

what it was. Writing in *Jazzwise* 124, Brian Priestley says:

"The billing sounds highly significant, but the circumstances are more mundane. Plank... made his recently established studio available to Duke, who wanted to rehearse and record a couple of tunes for his private "stockpile". It was just two tunes, here in three takes each (total time 29 minutes) and you'd have to bend over backwards to find much excitement in an original by Wild Bill Davis (*Alerado*) and a piece of Ellington exotica (*Afrique*) that he re-recorded seven months later as part of *Afro Eurasian Eclipse*."

Perhaps the hype surrounding this release can be attributed, in part, to a misunderstanding of the role of the producer in an Ellington session. Whilst Plank may have been a sort of technological Svengali figure to recording sessions with bands such as Guru Guru, Cluster, Kraftwerk and Neu! Ellington's music, of course, needed neither multi-tracking nor any other kind of sonic manipulation. Ellington was always his own producer, despite the name on the back cover of the LP (or front and centre on this one) and never more so when he was paying for studio time out of his own money. (In fact, I am sure there is an interesting paper to be written there on

Ellington as record producer.)

Ever the chameleon, though, it is true Ellington's music did have the capacity to absorb some of the *zeitgeist* throughout his career, whilst remaining true to itself. This was particularly so in his final years where the smoking lines of Wild Bill Davis's Hammond organ and the somewhat outré vocals of Toney Watkins created a kind of funky 'happening' vibe. Perhaps this is what has led the Internet critics to believe, mistakenly, that Plank had some sort of hand in shaping the sound of the music on this particular session. The cumulative effect of numerous versions of *Alerado* and *Afrique* is, after all, quite mesmerizing; *Kosmiche Musik* by proxy, perhaps...

Takes of choice for these two tracks have already been issued on Storyville (1018402) *Duke Ellington: New York, New York*. The sound quality – perhaps in deference to the esteem in which the German record producer is held – is superior here, however, on this release. *Alerado* was written by Wild Bill Davis in 1970 as a tribute to another record producer, Alexandre Rado. In his remembrance of his friend in DEMS Bulletin 97/3, François Xavier Moulé wrote:

"Alex's involvement with Ellingtonians goes back to 1969 when he produced his first recording session for the famous Barclay label, involving Chuck Connors, trombone, Norris Turney, alto sax and Paul Gonsalves on tenor sax. The session came out on LP as *Paul Gonsalves In Paris* on the Blue Star/Barclay label, Volume 7 in the *House Of Jazz* series. Another session was produced in 1970, again with Paul Gonsalves, Norris Turney, Cat Anderson on trumpet and Wild Bill Davis, as 'Prince Woodyard', at the organ. The LP resulting from this session was published by Riviera/Barclay as *Paul Gonsalves And His All Stars*. The LP contains a piece Wild Bill wrote and dedicated to Alexandre called *Alerado*, a title standing, obviously, for Ale(xandre)Rado. It was recorded at the studio Hoche, in Paris, on 6 July, 1970, but the piece was recorded again three days later, this time by the full Ellington band, in Köln, Germany. The recording was part of the stockpile, but two takes were made available through broadcast by Danish Radio."

The final take of the second tune, *Afrique* offers an interesting mystery. The listener hears in the mix the ethereal voice of a female singer, offering a wordless vocal in the tradition of *Creole Love Call* or *On a Turquoise Cloud*. Opinions differ as to whether the vocal was performed live or added in some stage of post-production. There is no consensus on the identity of the vocalist either. Jan Bruér of Stockholm is in no doubt, however. In an Internet discussion group, he asserts:

"The woman vocalist with Duke in Cologne July

1970 is most certainly Lena Junoff, a very special Swedish singer, who met Duke in Göteborg (Gothenburg) a few days earlier and toured with the band to Germany. She was invited to sing with them at Rainbow Grill in August (where I happened to make a bad amateur bootleg recording!)."

True enough, according to David Palmquist's web resource *The Duke Where and When*, Ellington was in Goteborg 8 July, 1970, the day before the Orchestra assembled in the Rhenus Studio. Lena Junoff joined the Orchestra on 3 August 1970 and was with the band throughout Ellington's residency at The Rainbow Room, leaving the ensemble on 5 September 1970.

Whether the vocalist is Lena Junoff or not, she was in Ellington's orbit during that summer, 1970. She is an interesting character. She was born in Goteborg in 1942 and began performing at the age of 15. Her singing voice spanned five octaves. Her first stage name was Adah Helene, prior to re-launching her career in England under the name Margaret Lee. She has had a colourful life both on and off stage which has embraced drugs, rock and roll (she apparently performed with Rod Stewart in his mother's apartment) and a pornographic film. She also inaugurated colour television in West Germany with Willy Brandt. An accident in the early 90s injured her voice.

In more recent times, she came to the attention of journalist and author Bo Sjökvist who was looking to make a documentary on the controversial figure Johnny Bode. The documentary was ultimately abandoned. Little wonder when, according to Sjökvist, the filmmaker tried to conduct an interview with Junoff. He said:

"The first thing we got from Lena was a kind of show. She begins to sing, took us around the whole apartment and shows photos of Duke Ellington, Jimi Hendrix, PJ Proby and talk, talk and talk. Then she begins to invite us for canapés - it is jellied veal and strawberries - and she says that she wants to have a cooking show. We try to talk about Bode, but Lena did not like it. When I went away I thought 'maybe I should do something about Lena Junoff instead'."

Whether it is the voice of Lena Junoff or not we hear on this newly released take of *Afrique*, her story is an interesting footnote to Ellington's tour of continental Europe in the summer of 1970.



DUKE ELLINGTON THE TREASURY SHOWS VOL.19

CD1: *Take The 'A' Train; Just A-Sittin' And A-Rockin'; Bond Promo; 9 20 Special; I Can't Get Started; Flamingo; Fancy Dan; Diminuendo In Blue-Transblucency-Crescendo In Blue; Bond Promo; Someone; Three Cent Stomp; Bond Promo; I'm Just A Lucky So And So¹; Intro; Barzallai Lew; The 'C' Jam Blues; Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me; Subtle Slough; Take The 'A' Train* (54:14)

CD2: *In A Mellotone; I'm Just A Lucky So And So; Announcement; Sono; Rugged Romeo; Circe; Air Conditioned Jungle; Full Moon And Empty Arms; Announcement; Bond Promo; Laughin' On The Outside; Take The 'A' Train; Take The 'A' Train; Just A-Sittin' And A-Rockin'¹; Crosstown; Bond Promo; Summertime; Teardrops In The Rain; Frankie And Johnny/Metronome All Out; Bond Promo; Hop, Skip And Jump; Take The 'A' Train; Take It From There; Later Tonight; Wait For Me, Mary; Go Away Blues; Tonight I Shall Sleep; Don't Get Around Much Anymore* (72:09)

CDs1/2 personnel (1946 tracks): Shelton Hemphill, Taft Jordan, Francis Williams, Cat Anderson, Reunald Jones (tp), Ray Nance (tp, vn, vo); Joe Nanton, Lawrence Brown, Claude Jones, Wilbur de Paris (tb); Jimmy Hamilton, Al Sears, Russell 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)

CDs1/2 personnel (1943 tracks): Taft Jordan, Wallace Jones, Harold Baker (tp), Ray Nance (tp, vn); Joe Nanton, Lawrence Brown, Bernard Archer (tb); Jimmy Hamilton, Elbert 'Skippy' Williams, Johnny Hodges, Nat Jones, Harry Carney (reeds); Duke Ellington (p), Fred Guy (g), Junior Raglin (b), Sonny Greer (d). Betty Roché, Al Hibbler (vo)

CD1: tks 1-15, bc Dartmouth College, Hanover NH, 4 May 1946.

tk 16-21, bc Hurricane Restaurant NYC, 3 September 1943.

CD2: tks 1-21, bcs Radio City NYC, 18 and 25 May 1946.

tk 22-28, bc Hurricane Restaurant NYC, 1 September 1943.

DETS 903 9019

This double-CD set collects Duke's three weekly Treasury Shows from May 1946 (we have no broadcast from Saturday 11th, which is strange, since by then the three-week Paramount engagement had already begun, during which the Orchestra would broadcast from their usual Manhattan studio on 18th and 25th). The 4 May show was recorded out on the road, in New Hampshire. These broadcasts last for 30-40 minutes, compared to the full hour which had been

usual in 1945, and two are on CD2. With Ray Nance and Tricky Sam Nanton back in the band since mid-April, the trumpet section boasts six players and the trombones four, with Wilbur de Paris retained, presumably to support Tricky in the aftermath of his stroke the previous autumn. Strayhorn's rhapsodizing relieves the Bonds plugs.

Each CD has a filler, a broadcast from the Hurricane Restaurant dating from early September 1943. On these Taft Jordan and Bernard Archer cover for Stewart and Tizol who were both on leave; Skippy Williams replaces Ben Webster, who had left the band earlier in the summer; and Nat Jones deps for Otto Hardwicke. The set thus offers valuable coverage of two points in the mid-40s when the band did not visit the Victor studios. For both years, the music on CD 1 is more consistently substantial, the music on CD 2 is more out-of-the-way and in some cases quite unfamiliar.

Duke, who had already revived his 1941 success *Just A-Sittin' And A-Rockin'* in 1945, broadened its commercial appeal in 1946 by adding a Lee Gaines lyric sung by Ray Nance. This second vocal airing differs markedly from the previous week's by being much brisker, and by placing Ray's vocal chorus, I think correctly, *after* the instrumental exposition shared by tenor and trumpet. And if that's Ray's trumpet on the bridge of chorus 1, his approach is very different from his take a week earlier, or on the 1941 Victor. Another innovation which would be retained is the return of the singer for the second half of the third chorus before the usual coda. *9 20 Special* is Buck Clayton's 1945 chart of Earl Warren's composition for the Basie band. We hear from a crackling Jordan, an emotive Sears, a floating Hodges and a voluble Brown, with a window for Ellington and Pettiford in the closing chorus before Anderson caps the final bars with tremendous *brio*.

While these strong openers are familiar from other versions from the period, *I Can't Get Started* is the earliest Ellington version we have of a song he would record vocally for Bethlehem in 1956 in an even more casual performance than this one. Here we have no singing, just Ray Nance's violin at its most persuasive, and the bonus of some fine Hodges alto, against a cushion of soft reeds. Duke and Oscar Pettiford thread the entire performance. It is unfortunate that *Flamingo* is cut short as soon as it gets going, though other complete versions survive of Hibbler's take on the 1941 Herb Jeffries speciality. *Fancy Dan* had been in the book since the late summer of 1945. Taft Jordan takes the breaks in the fourth chorus which were formerly Rex Stewart's, otherwise the solo routine is broadly unchanged: Nanton, Carney, Sears. Carney plays baritone sax, not bass clarinet as the note asserts.

This sprightly performance also benefits greatly from Oscar Pettiford's fleet double-bass.

The *Blues Cluster* which follows is rather special. After experimenting during 1945 with various transitions between the *Diminuendo* and the *Crescendo* Duke settled, I think wisely, on a new composition, *Transblucency*, to occupy this position in 1946. Eddie Lambert judged this 'the most rousing DETS performance', singling out for special mention the 'exciting Cat Anderson high note trumpet' at the end. I think the special euphoria also has to do with Oscar Pettiford's drive, and its effect on Sonny Greer. More poignantly, this is the last time we will ever hear Tricky Sam's brief but telling contribution towards the end of the *Diminuendo*. Note that, while co-composer Lawrence Brown plays trombone in chorus 2 of *Transblucency*, in solo and with Kay Davis, the muted trombone blending in the trio with Kay and Jimmy Hamilton's clarinet in the outer choruses is often said to be that of Lawrence's section-mate, Claude Jones. Anyone interested in the performance history of *D And C In Blue* should have at least one version from the Treasury Shows. While each has its particular merits to influence personal preference and all are very good, this is one of the best.

A serene *Someone* follows closely the pattern of its original 1942 recording, with half-chorus contributions fore and aft from Hodges and Brown, and a full chorus from Nance, whose custom it was, Patricia Willard tells us, to play this lovely song at the end of each practice session, as a reward to himself. *Three Cent Stomp*, in the book since 1943, has its first known 1946 outing here. Taft Jordan takes the first chorus, originally Shorty Baker's, Tricky reclaims his solo from Wilbur de Paris, and Nance, Pettiford and Sears follow, with Anderson capping the closing ensemble. *New DESOR* tells us that the transitional passage from Pettiford's solo to the band chorus which follows, formerly Rex Stewart's, is here played by Francis Williams. *I'm Just A Lucky So And So* is interrupted towards the close of Lawrence Brown's contribution, to bring the broadcast to an end.

A complete *So And So* is the second offering on the 18 May Show, following the opening *In A Mellotone*. Cootie Williams took the plunger solo on the classic 1940 *Rose Room* variant, and Ray Nance inherited it after Cootie's departure to join Benny Goodman. *New DESOR* lists Nance on this version too, but Graham Colombé contests this in his recent *Jazz Journal* review of this set. He hears Cat Anderson here, and I find no reason to dispute his judgment.

Sono, one of the magnificent sequence of features which Duke created for Harry Carney through the 1940s and into the 1950s, had a short shelf life in the band's book. It was premiered at the 4 January 1946 Carnegie Hall concert, but this is its next-to-last

surviving performance by the band. It would resurface in summer 1949 in a new version with strings recorded for Norman Granz's *Jazz Scene* album. The fine Taft Jordan feature *Rugged Romeo* was also introduced at the 4 January concert, and like *Sono* it was recorded for Capitol at the end of March.

Lawrence Brown's feature *Circe* is equally fine and a real rarity. It too dates from the concert series earlier in the year, first surfacing at the Chicago concert on 20 January; this is the only other known recording. As the annotator reminds us, Circe was the sorceress who turned Odysseus's followers into swine. The second subject resurfaced in 1947 as the trombone theme of *On A Turquoise Cloud*.

Jimmy Hamilton's showcase *Air Conditioned Jungle* had been in the book since 1944. Though often played in 1945-46, and studio-recorded for World Broadcasting, it would not be recorded for commercial issue until late 1947. On *Full Moon And Empty Arms*, a song originating in a well-known theme from Rachmaninov's second piano concerto, Billy Strayhorn accompanies Kay Davis in a unique and beautifully realized performance which has nothing to do with jazz. *Laughing On The Outside*, a lovely Hodges ballad feature, is interrupted for a newsflash. As the only other version we know is a vocal one by Al Hibbler, the disruption is regrettable. The closing *A Train*, taken at an interestingly deliberate tempo, is truncated a short way into Ray Nance's solo.

After the introductory *A Train* the 25 May broadcast opens with a more leisurely *Just A-Settin' And A-Rockin'* than the one from Hanover on CD1. Hodges' *Crosstown*, premiered on the thirtieth Show the previous November and studio recorded more recently for Capitol Transcriptions, receives its last known performance here. The annotator confuses it with the eponymous song Glenn Miller recorded in 1940, but it is of course the Hodges piece familiar from the earlier recordings. In the second chorus Nanton has eight bars in what must be one of his last solo utterances.

Duke had been featuring Al Hibbler on *Summertime* since 1943, and his ambivalence towards Gershwin's lullaby, terrifyingly captured in the *Piano In The Foreground* recording (1961), is already evident in this performance. Cat Anderson's *Teardrops In The Rain*, heavily featured during 1945, is now approaching the end of its active life. *Frankie And Johnny* is the full-length version leading into *Metronome All Out*, and the pensive sound of Tricky working his unique magic for the last time is very moving. A fine reading of *Hop, Skip, Jump* follows Duke's final bonds plug. All these performances are very convincing. There are abrupt truncations and unfortunate interruptions on the May 1946 Shows, but there's very little second-rate music.

As usual the 1943 Hurricane music is less well recorded than the Treasury Shows, but as usual it is of

absorbing interest, and none of it, as far as I know, has appeared on record before. *Barzallai Lew*, a 1942 feature for Rex Stewart, only survives from radio airchecks, of which this is the last. Rex was on sabbatical in summer 1943, and Shorty Baker takes over his role. On *C Jam Blues* Nat Jones takes Barney Bigard's old clarinet role. The broadcast ends with an early *Do Nothin'*... and a brisk *Subtile Slough*. The lightweight music on the 1 September broadcast on CD2 is also very interesting. *Take It From There* is a Robin-Rainger song, mistitled in the CD booklet, so older members hoping to evoke nostalgic memories of the Dick Bentley-Joy Nichols-Jimmy Edwards BBC comedy show will be disappointed. Carney and Baker solo on this, the only known recording. *Later Tonight* and *Wait For Me Mary*, almost as rare, feature respectively Nanton and Hamilton (very briefly), and Jordan and Hodges. The annotator's assertion that this is the only known Betty Roché version of *Go Away Blues* is wrong - she recorded it on the 9 Dec 1943 World Transcriptions session. *Tonight I Shall Sleep* is another rarity in this Hibbler vocal version.

Production values are in the main up to Storyville's usual standard, though *Metronome All Out* goes unmentioned on the track listing. Bill McFadden's notes are full and informative, though I disagree with him over several matters. I've mentioned some of the errors of fact, and I dispute his assertion that Duke wrestled with 'constant personnel losses and gains' in the Treasury Shows period. 1945-46 was a time of relative stability in the band, other than in the girl singer department. Procope and Pettiford replaced Hardwicke and Raglin, Nanton suffered a stroke and then died, Stewart left and Nance took six months' leave and came back. That was about it, apart from brief absences.

Musically, the set is another great success, and that's what matters.

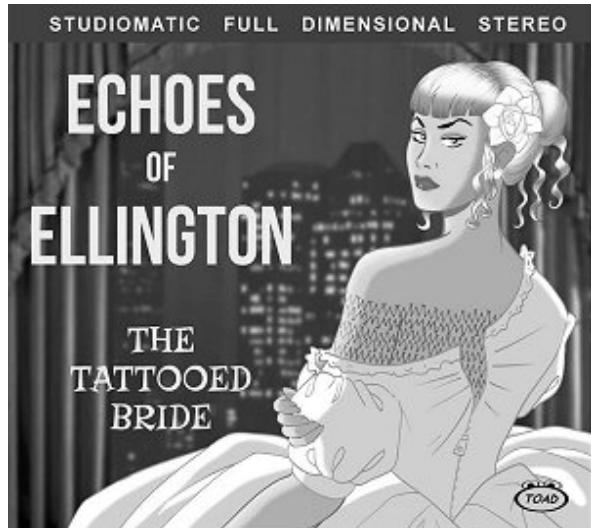
Roger Boyes

ECHOES OF ELLINGTON

THE TATTOOED BRIDE

The Tattooed Bride; Things Ain't What They Used To Be; Air Conditioned Jungle; Sepia Panorama; Just Squeeze Me; Heaven; Waiting For Some Trumpets; Tootin' Through The Roof (42.17)
 Pete Long (MD, cl), Mike Lovatt (tp), Enrico Tomasso (tp), Nathan Bray (tp), Ryan Quigley (tp), Louis Dowdeswell (tp), Andy Flaxman (tb), Chris Traves (tb), Callum Au (tb, v-tb), Colin Skinner (as), Peter Ripper (ss, as, cl), Paul Nathaniel (ts, cl), Alex Garnett (ts), Jay Craig (bs, cl), James Pearson (p), Martin Wheatley (g), Laurence Ungless (b), Richard Pite (d), Georgina Jackson (vo).

Toad TOCD 005



With eight tracks in a varied mix of tempos, this latest CD from the irrepressible Pete Long and his resurrected *Echoes* orchestra is an absolute delight. The title track, almost 11 minutes long, takes the cue from pianist James Pearson's opening theme and Pete Long's Hamilton-style clarinet solo to create ensemble and solo sounds which are prescient of the triumphant *Such Sweet Thunder* album recorded in 1956/7, eight years after the debut of *Bride*.

With the exception of *Waiting For Some Trumpets*, (an entertaining eight minute "Head Arrangement" allowing everyone to unwind, including the sole trumpeter Nathan Bray) the other six tracks are faithful tributes to the originals and credit is duly given in the sleeve notes to transcribers David Berger, Peter Long, Alan Prosser and Ken Rattenbury.

The only vocal track is *Just Squeeze Me* which is given a cool interpretation (very different from the raffish style Ray Nance made his own) by Georgina Jackson. She has come a long way from when she played trumpet (and sang only occasionally) with the Wigan Youth Jazz Orchestra and the Andy Prior Band. *Heaven* will always evoke memories of Alice Babs but here is a vehicle for a poignant alto sax solo by Colin Skinner.

Sound quality is very good but, with my cloth ears, I must leave it to others to assess the claim on the cover that these recordings feature "Studiomatic Full Dimensional Stereo"!

Finally, the presentation of this excellent CD (a double gatefold) enables space for a transcript of Duke's own explanatory words when introducing the first-ever rendition of the title track at Carnegie Hall in 1948 (you will have to make a purchase to learn of its origin and to see an excellent artist's impression of the tattooed bride herself!) There then follows a comprehensive account of the music by Peter Vacher who was present throughout the Angel Studios, London, recording.

Well worth seeking out.

Peter Caswell

AVID ACTION

Encouraged perhaps by their success with the *Ellington Highlights 1940-42* set reviewed in *BL* 22/2, Avid Records have issued two double-CD compilations of Ellington LPs from the 1950s and 1960s. Avid 1157 collects two Verve classics, the *Back To Back* LP with Edison and Hodges and the *Side By Side* LP with Hodges and Strayhorn; the 1962 small-band collaboration with Coleman Hawkins (Impulse); and five alternate takes from *For The First Time*, the 1961 Columbia session which brought together the Ellington and Basie bands. Avid 1158 has the contents of four Columbia LPs, the Ellington-Basie encounter as originally issued, plus *Bal Masqué* and *Midnight In Paris*, and the LP which had the music from the *Peer Gynt* suites on one side and *Suite Thursday* on the other.

A lot of this music has been much re-issued, in varying combinations, but these inexpensive Avid sets are always an attractive option, if their content suits your collecting needs. Always keep in mind though, when considering buying the Hawkins set, that the finest track from this session, Hawk's majestic *Solitude*, was not issued on the Impulse LP in the first place, and so does not feature on some reissues, including this one.

In my review of Avid's 1940-42 set I mentioned varying opinions regarding the sound quality of the transfers. Graham Colombé's review of Avid 1158 in September's *Jazz Journal* has interesting comments about the restoration process employed. They confirm my suspicion that these are, in the end, subjective matters of personal taste, and that differences in sound quality may be hard to discern by all but the most fastidious listeners using the most expensive equipment. **RB**

....AND VINYLLY

Neo-vinyl enthusiasts will be interested in two recent LP issues. Atlantic Ppan SD 2 304 (I've copied that directly from an *In brief* mini-review in *Jazz Journal*) has the exact content of the 1973 *Great Paris Concert* double-LP set, which caught the Ellington Orchestra in 1963, at the top of its game and fired up by an appreciative audience. RCA Victor 3706 has a Wild Bill Davis/Johhny Hodges set with Lawrence Brown and others, recorded in Atlantic City in August 1966. For details refer to info@speakerscorner.de The Ellington Orchestra was playing at the Steel Pier, and Lawrence and Johnny took time out to join Davis's group at the Belmont Club, where RCA recorded them. **RB**

Box of Delights



The sequel to *Columbia Studio Albums 1950-58* has a street date of 30 October 2015.

The good news: first time releases in the US on CD of *Unknown Session* (something of an anachronism here since the album was not released in Ellington's lifetime) and *The Girls' Suite*.

The not so good news: why finish in 1961 and not 1962 which is when Ellington's contract with Columbia expired? Two of his original studio albums, *Midnight in Paris* and *All American In Jazz* (which could have fit easily on one CD) remain unreleased on CD in the USA - and indeed, unreleased since their original LP incarnations over fifty years ago, virtually.

The contents of the box comprise the albums: *Jazz Party*; *Anatomy of a Murder*; *Festival Session*; *Blues In Orbit*; *The Nutcracker Suite* (paired here with *The Girls' Suite*); *Piano In The Background*; *Peer Gynt* and *Suite Thursday* (released on CD outside France for the first time in the LP's original form); *Unknown Session*; *Piano In The Foreground*; *First Time: Duke Ellington and Count Basie*.

As with the first box of Columbia Studio Albums released two years ago, the albums here have been issued in Japanese-style mini-LP cardboard covers in a sturdy 'clam shell' box. Those titles issued on CD originally as part of the Ellington Centenary and the second swathe issued in 2004 are re-issued here complete with bonus cuts, minus, of course, the extensive and informative liner notes by Patricia Willard. I'm keeping my original issues in jewel cases for those notes alone. As with the previous release, Sony's Mark Wilder has been involved in the remastering process so the fidelity is in good hands. Indeed, in several instances, the albums have been given a makeover with DSD ("Direct Stream Digital") so the sound is first class throughout.

Whilst not billed as a limited edition, I'd be surprised if this is not a single print run, so if you want a set, don't delay. The first set is already changing hands for silly money. **IB**

Piano in the Foreground: Matthew J. Cooper on Duke



Duke Ellington was not the most dexterous pianist, but his inherent musicality makes him one of the most fascinating. In terms of musical rather than digital virtuosity, he is unexcelled. For many of his listeners, Ellington's pianism has long been overshadowed by his greatness as a composer and bandleader, but Ellington has always been recognized by his fellow musicians as one of the best jazz pianists.

In a special edition of *Down Beat* (dated April 25, 1974), which was issued on the occasion of Ellington's 75th birthday, the Canadian arranger, composer and bandleader Gil Evans had the following to say about Ellington the piano player:

"You're part of my musical life. You're part of everybody's musical life. You have to be. Many of us take you for granted ... like the air we breathe... you are the original man ... the original composer for America ... the main composer ... one of the all-time great piano players ... a sensational jazz piano player (...)" (p. 16).

In the same issue, Ellington scholar Brooks Kerr examines Ellington's piano style as follows:

"I admire your skill as a pianist, which so many people seem to overlook. No one else can coax quite the sounds you get from your instrument. Your touch is so rich ... the way you strike any chord. Art Tatum once said, "Duke knows all the chords," and I can hear what he meant. I think you have the largest, most colourful, harmonic palette of any pianist living. "The Lion observed once, if Edward had concentrated totally on the piano, he would have become a pianistic phenomenon." (p. 18).

Pianist Randy Weston is brief and to the point:

"Ellington is the master. Though I listened to Duke's orchestra from the beginning, I didn't hear his piano much until later years. Like Monk, he was always creating new, wonderful sounds from the piano. His introductions, the things he could do in four to eight bars to bring in the band, were incredible." (*Down Beat*, October 1998, p. 23).

Pianist Matthew Shipp is particularly impressed by Ellington's playing on the famous 1962 *Money Jungle* session with Mingus and Roach:

"There's a very dark grittiness and beauty to the harmonic language that Duke employs that's a full flowering of a piano language. There's something so integral about the space-time that he generates ... Every little architectural detail is carved to the nth degree. It's one of the greatest examples of piano playing I've ever heard." (*Down Beat*, June 2013, p. 37).

Fortunately, Dr Matt Cooper has dwelled at greater length on the peculiarities of Ellington's pianistic artistry in his important book *Duke Ellington as Pianist: A Study of Styles*. The book is not only of great importance because it puts Ellington's piano in the foreground, but also because the author substantiates his arguments with vast knowledge of the subject matter and copious piano transcriptions. But, most significantly, this book is a must-read because it is the first book ever on Duke Ellington the pianist. And it has been written with so much authority and expert knowledge that it will remain the undisputed reference-guide on Ellington the pianist for many years to come.

Dr. Louis Tavecchio, Professor Emeritus,
University of Amsterdam, May 4, 2015

WONDROUS POUNDING
DUKE ELLINGTON AS PIANIST: A Study of
Styles
by Matthew J. Cooper
The College Music Society (USA)

ISBN 978-1-881913-61-0 \$45 127 pages

I go for emotion in listening to Ellington's music and reading about him. If there is educational and intellectual stimulus as well so much the better, and if the whole thing swings then I am near ecstatic. If any of the above comes as a surprise then I am truly hooked.

Which is certainly so with Matthew J Cooper's masterly book. Can a book swing? I am in awe of Cooper, as I venture is anyone who heard him play and speak at the 2012 Woking and 2014 Amsterdam Ellington Conferences. His patently spiritual connection with Duke as pianist is to be nurtured, protected, and treasured. It seems banal to say Cooper in performance brings the master to life at the piano, but he does so exquisitely and precisely, and then some, as he oftentimes continues to play by venturing into his own piano interpretations of familiar and unfamiliar works. Now he brings Duke to life in print too. How good is that?

Do not be deterred by his own meticulously transcribed examples of Duke's unique pianism if reading music has passed you by. Cooper's achievement here is exemplary and will prove to be of lasting importance. But his text can be readily appreciated by the wider audience. Take his investigation of *Springtime In Africa (Piano In The Foreground, 1961)* where Cooper points us to "sustained and ringing sonorities that hang lazily in the air". Be hopefully intrigued that he continues by detailing Duke's concepts as particularly reminiscent of *Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir* from Claude Debussy's first book of *Preludes* (1909-10) where, like Debussy, Duke's "sustained bass pedal tones resonate under triads superimposed high above". Can't you just hear that coming at you from the page?

Cooper continues: "Along with the abundance of pedal and the promise of languid atmosphere, the harmonies themselves recall Impressionism." He is drawing a distinction between what he sees as Ellington's typical and atypical styles, just as he did to mesmerising effect in Woking and Amsterdam but he still conveys the down-home Ellington pianism with talk of pounding out repeated blue thirds and minor ninths with the whole endeavour of *Springtime* ending "violently with a low-register cluster on the piano".

We can all get that, and it chimes with my idea of enjoyment, which is there both in Ellington's piano playing and Cooper's writing. One cannot fault his

purpose of the book, from its dedication to his teachers and "to the many unsung heroes of the jazz world", to the two indexes separating musical compositions and subject matters. In between there is an introduction, biographical primer, Duke's early stride style explained, and then the meaty chapters on Duke's typical and atypical piano styles as Cooper sees them. Everywhere Cooper brings it down home from dizzy analytical musical heights to the gut-reaction of the listener to Duke's "wondrous pounding".

On the latter point Duke was no piano purist. Cooper digs his rhythmic style and percussive attack, his "orchestral" conception, preference for the lower register, and traits which may be linked to his big band writing, others rooted in Harlem stride. Yet Cooper traces his transition to a modern jazz style as if "bypassing the entire bebop era", to establish "an original iconic style that became a bellwether for contemporaneous jazz".

References and credits, old and new, are comprehensively detailed and acknowledged, as is contemporary assistance from such as Carl Woideck, and Louis Tavecchio, both of whom the author met at Ellington 2012 in Woking. Woideck is cited in drawing Cooper's attention to the right hand piano intro motive to *In A Sentimental Mood* (30 April, 1935) being remarkably similar to the opening of Monk's *Round Midnight*, and Tavecchio mentioning a late Dutch critic, Michiel de Ruyter, a friend of Ellington, confirming that Duke was indeed angry when he played *Summertime* "with its stark dissonance and lack of steady tempo" (Cooper) on *Piano In The Foreground..*

The best aspect of the book is the success Cooper has in conveying Ellington's piano playing and piano legacy to all readers, whether or not they are musicians. Suffice it to say that if you want more elucidation from your listening to Duke's playing you can find it here, definitively so. Select to the three trio albums *Piano Reflections* (1953), *Money Jungle* (1962), and *Piano In The Foreground* as your aural companions to the book and settle down to travel the road.

When we arrive at the short final chapter, titled Reflections, it is with a sense of shared accomplishment, having travelled the road with an author who has put his all into interpreting Ellington's "monumental keyboard legacy... unparalleled in the jazz piano world". And as does eminent musicologist David Schiff in *The Ellington Century* (2012), deep as he delves into musical intricacies and theories, Cooper never forgets the fundamental delight he and we have in Ellington's playing of that most satisfying of instruments, the piano. **Geoff Smith**

Cambridge Blue

Roger Boyes and Geoff Smith share their respective perspectives on The Cambridge Companion to Duke Ellington

I had already written about this recent addition to the Ellington bookshelf when I received *BL* 22/2 with Graham Colombé's review. Graham's reaction is so similar to mine, for so many of the same reasons, that there's no point going over the same ground twice. So, instead of a more formal review, here are some thoughts.

The imprimatur of a university, however distinguished, is no automatic guarantee of a book's excellence. I did not think: 'Cambridge's name is on this book, it's going to be good'. I'm sure their presses seek to enhance the reputation of the universities whose names they share, but I'm also sure they keep a watchful eye on the market place. Sooner or later the commissioning editor for any 'great composers' series will want a volume on Duke. His name is 'hot', especially in the USA where he enjoys 'iconic' status. Much depends on the care taken over the initial commissioning and the choice of contributors, and while I found plenty to enjoy in this, my fourth book in the *Cambridge Companion* series, it is not the best.

The editorial approach of Edward Green, who spoke at a DESUK meeting I went to ten years ago, seems decidedly 'hands-off'. Hence the many repetitions and revisits of ground already covered by other contributors to which Graham refers. Green's introduction considers Duke's achievement in terms of Aesthetic Realism, a somewhat Hegelian philosophical system which emphasizes 'the oneness of opposites'. I'm no philosopher, but this idea offered me little to inform his oversight of a book which would, he says, 'show why Duke Ellington was America's most important composer'.

Perhaps this is my problem with this book. While one or two other contenders in such a dubious ranking are mentioned in passing, I found nothing to show how Duke has the edge over them. In any case I find the idea daft. Why line up Ellington against, eg, Ives, Copland, Harris? Who wants to rank Bach's 'importance' against Mozart's or Beethoven's? The introduction offers nice descriptions of what happens in *The Mooche* (1 October 1928), the 1927 *Black And Tan*, the 1932 *It Don't Mean A Thing*, and the opening of *Concerto For Cootie*. But I gained no clear idea of the bigger picture.

The first part is titled *Ellington In Context*, but that context is not defined at the outset. David Berger's fine contribution goes straight into the music through the 1940 scores. Brian Priestley's survey of Duke's overseas visits is a model of conciseness, bringing new detail and a fresh slant to the well-worked topic of Duke's early ventures abroad, and covering comprehensively the later ones. Ruth Ellington's son Steven James gives the perspective of a family insider who travelled with the band in its later years, always valuable when the subject is the clannish Ellingtons. John Howland draws largely on two familiar sources, *Music Is My Mistress* and Mark Tucker's 1991 book *Ellington – The Early Years*. A fifth, diffuse chapter eventually settles

down to consider some of Duke's early extended works in the context of the Afro-American cultural background.

Like Graham I found the decade-by-decade survey very disappointing, so much so that I came out of Part Two thinking the book has a hole where its heart should be. While the writers clearly respect Duke's music, there's little evidence of wide listening. Coverage is often limited to the most familiar compositions in their most familiar recordings. Worse, there's no sense of delight. And where are the Treasury Shows, the live recordings (other than *Fargo*) and the radio transcriptions? Where is the stockpile? The chapter on the final years eventually becomes little more than a travelogue. Anecdotes about 1960s recording sessions are interesting to read, but how do they help to support the book's aim to establish Duke as America's 'most important' composer?

The best chapter by far in Part Two is Anthony Brown's on the 1950s. He challenges the usual view of the early 50s as a musical nadir; finds good things to say about the Capitols (not hard to do, but so often they are lazily dismissed, apart from the piano trios and maybe *Ellington '55*). He emphasizes the value of live performance recordings, considers briefly the Bethlehems, including the routinely belittled *DE Presents* LP, and deals well with *Idiom '59*, a work most commentators ignore.

Part Three is much better, with good chapters on the songs, the blues, the piano player and the longer works. I'm not sure how a summative chapter on Billy supports the case for Ellington's pre-eminence, but his contribution must be considered, and Walter van de Leur is the man to do it, as is Will Friedwald for the songs. Walter has done so much to de-mystify the role of Duke's 'writing and arranging companion'. Bill Dobbins' rewarding chapter on the pianist sent me back to the recordings he considers and analyses. Marcello Piras's wide-ranging essay on Duke as a descriptive writer is quirky and stimulating, though I am not convinced by his use of birdsong to back up his view that *Black Beauty* really was a portrait of Florence Mills before 1943. I'm open to the idea. The fact that Duke didn't describe it as such in 1928 doesn't mean he wasn't inspired to write it by her untimely death and spectacular funeral parade. But I find no support for the idea in the clucking of hens and the song of blackbirds. Nevertheless, Piras's lively writing sweeps the reader along. His enthusiasm is a pleasing contrast to the sort of prose in which tropes lurk.

The chapter on the blues begins and ends with the assertion that in 1972 Duke chose to re-title *Mr J B Blues* as *See See Rider on This One's For Blanton*, as an 'autumnal gesture' of homage to the great blues tradition of which Ma Rainey's classic is a part. No evidence is offered for this, and it is Ray Brown, not Duke, who quotes the song. The LP appeared after Duke's death, and I find the usual assumption much more plausible: the session's annotators failed to note the correct title at the time of recording, and when the LP was prepared for release Duke was no longer around to ask.

So the producers resorted to a semi-educated guess based on Ray's quote.

Some contributors are careless about attention to detail. The Ellington-Mills association lasted well over a decade (p100). I don't think that 'he visited Africa several times on concert tours' accurately summarizes Duke's two short trips to that continent, in 1966 and in late 1973 (p69). Nor do I think 'rounds out the *Far East Suite*' (p178) conveys clearly the fact that *Ad Lib On Nippon* is a quite distinct four-part work, included on the *Far East Suite* LP for programming convenience. *Check And Double Check* is mis-dated by two years (p108, six pages after being correctly dated to 1930). Though she sang *Stormy Weather* on stage and in a film, Ivie did not record it until 1940 (p112). *Moonglow* is listed as an Ellington song (p113). *La Plus Belle Africaine* is much more than 'a rare feature for Harry Carney's magnificent baritone' (p161), and it's not even a rare one; its central episode, Harry's bit, is just one of a string of splendid Carney showcases stretching back to *Frustration* (1944), and maybe further. *Circle* (not *Cycle*) of *Fourths* is not 'a moment to relax and regroup between excursions farther afield' in *Such Sweet Thunder*; it is the suite's finale (p178). Many such inaccuracies needed correcting, either by authorial self-checking or by editorial proof-reading.

On the subject of authorial self-checking, David Palmquist has found numerous inaccuracies in the Associate Editor's *Duke Ellington Chronology*, a resource in which accuracy should be paramount.

Some of these points may seem trivial and nit-picking, but lack of care and the absence of wise and informed oversight annoy me. Some contributors to this book are clearly committed to their subject, but others convey the impression, rightly or wrongly, that their input is just another title for the academic brag sheet, just another quick look at an area of passing musical interest.

I have a further concern. The Cambridge imprint has clout. The book will attract musically literate readers who know little about Duke but wish to learn more. I bought two other volumes in this series, *The Cambridge Companion to the Musical* and *The Cambridge Companion to the Clarinet*, for exactly this reason. For such readers, accuracy and care are doubly important; errors which simply annoy me may mislead them. If you do decide to buy this book, you'll find plenty in it to enjoy. But you may also feel, as I do, that it could have been a lot better, and that *The Duke Ellington Reader*, published over twenty years ago, is a more rewarding and reliable companion for anyone seeking to develop a serious interest in Ellington's music.

Roger Boyes

This has to be an overview of an overview, the book proclaiming itself with reason as an in-depth overview of Duke's career, music, place in culture, and legacy. The publishers, although not their editor, claim their *Companion* to be the first batch of essays to provide said overview. This may be true but only in the period since Ellington's demise. Peter Gammond definitely was there first with his editing of *Duke Ellington: His Life and Music* in 1958, the only concession then being one of time constraint. Ellington had a lot of living, and giving, still to do.

One of the joys of the Gammond is the writers' constant throwing-forward of projections and brave prophesies. With

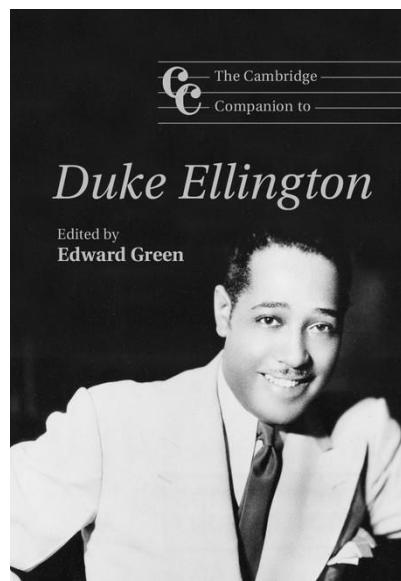
the benefit of hindsight we know they were mostly right. With the Cambridge, we cannot yet be sure, but its collective heart is in the right place and I enjoyed the many protestations of the genius of Ellington in its pages as much as I have long revelled in similar expressions in the Gammond.

Who could disagree with Green's reference in his introduction to his own selection of Duke's best compositions: "One can listen... and feel moment-by-moment on the edge of discovery. Repeated listening does not alter the feeling; it verifies it. The better one knows this music, the livelier and more surprising it grows, and the greater value we find in it"? Green praises Ellington's "as some of the most exhilarating and liberating music ever come to", Duke as "one of the greatest artists ever in the field of music", and places him in his first sentence as "America's greatest composer" with a good case being made for him being the most influential composer of the twentieth century.

That certainly softened me up and made me benignly receptive for what followed, essays collated under three headings: Ellington in context, through the decades, and Ellington and the jazz tradition. Acknowledging a debt to the Gammond anthology, Green says he wanted his authors to have diverse backgrounds – jazz musicians, professional critics, and musicologists both academic and non-academic. I have to say the academics dominate, as the notes on contributors confirm. I am quite happy with that and the confines of essay-writing limit overindulgence and aesthetic theorising in the main.

Minor inaccuracies have been picked up by some reviewers but again I can live with that and I venture most are subjective anyway. As with the Gammond since I bought it in 1959, I know already that I will refer to this and, what is more, enjoy rereading it, for as long as I am capable of so doing. For details of its contents, see *BL* 21/3, Edward Green's exchange with our Editor, Ian Bradley. There is also a useful chronology, bibliography (books, book chapters and journal articles), and meticulous index and source notes, the whole book being beautifully printed on quality paper and presented in hardback or paperback with a huge price differential between the two.

Geoff Smith



Two Front Teeth by Roger Boyes

In a lengthy piece about Lawrence Brown earlier this year, a regular contributor to *Jazz Journal* had this to say about Lawrence's final departure from the band: 'His retirement was not voluntary. After more than 30 years of fury with Ellington, things had finally come to a climax and the two men had had a fight in a European airport. Ellington knocked out two of Brown's front teeth and he was never able to play again.'

It is well known that there was no love lost down the years between Duke and Lawrence, and the usual reason given for the ill-feeling is Fredi Washington, the beautiful actress seen in the 1930 film *Black And Tan*. It has been said that Fredi was Lawrence's wife, and that Duke 'stole' her from him. On the other hand, Ellington's most recent biographer asserts that Lawrence married Fredi *after* the actress's affair with Duke was over. This doesn't explain why their past involvement with her should sour the two men's relationship permanently, though Lawrence was undoubtedly a man to harbour grudges, and his marriage to Fredi did not succeed. The biographer also tells the tale of the two front teeth, though he locates the fight 'backstage', rather than in a European airport.

The tale of the teeth raised a few eyebrows among *JJ* readers, mine included. For a start, it doesn't really seem in character with Ellington, who went to great lengths to avoid conflict and stay cool. The combustible Charles Mingus famously punched Jimmy Knepper in the teeth in 1962, inflicting lasting damage, but that wasn't really Ellington's way of doing things. Also, why would he endanger his star trombonist's ability to play, especially in late 1969? By then he was finding it hard to find suitable trombone players. He had recently lost Buster Cooper, and now he was touring Europe with only two, deploying Norris Turney from the reeds to play one of the three trombone pads in Wakefield, where I saw the band on 28 November.

I went to all but one of the annual Ellington conference between 1988 and 2000, where I heard many people's first-hand experiences of being with Duke and his musicians. I soon learned that the personal relationship of Ellington and Brown was poor, but I don't recall hearing the tale of the two front teeth. I used to jot down notes too, like an undergraduate at a lecture, when new insights came my way. At Ottawa in 1990 Kurt Dietrich, the acknowledged expert on Duke's trombone players, gave an hour-long presentation on Lawrence, but my jottings don't mention the story of the teeth.

Nevertheless, Dietrich does tell the story in his book *Duke's Bones*: '...difficult as it may be to believe, it is now common knowledge that Ellington punched Brown in the mouth, knocking out several teeth'. Unfortunately the usually meticulous Dietrich sheds no light on the source of this 'common knowledge', and the recent biographer, who defines the 'several' teeth as two, cites Dietrich, which doesn't take us any further. He also adds the assertion that Lawrence quit in December. The *JJ* columnist asserts that after losing the two teeth 'he was never able to play again'.

A key date in this story is 7 January 1970. On this day Duke recorded for Fantasy in Las Vegas, where the band was in residence at Caesar's Palace with Lawrence in his usual place in the trombone section. Not all the band took part in the Fantasy session, but Lawrence did, and played on three tracks. *Tippytoeing Through The Jungle Garden* and *Noon Mooning* are on Fantasy F-9640 *The Intimacy Of The Blues*. *The Kissing Mist* was unissued. He solos on *Tippytoeing*. It does not sound like the solo of a musician who has suffered the loss of two front teeth, rendering him never able to play again. It sounds like Lawrence soloing in his usual way without impediment.

On 8 January the band closed at Caesar's Palace, and Lawrence left at that point (having handed in his notice to quit in December). The band left to tour Japan, Australia and New Zealand on the following day. Lawrence obviously was not with them, but neither were Willie Cook, Paul Gonsalves, Paul Kondziela and Victor Gaskin, all of whom also stayed back in the USA.

Ken Vail's *Duke's Diary* (part 2, pp370-1), has reviews by Stanley Dance of the Caesar's Palace show and the Fantasy session. Neither report suggests Lawrence was labouring under the sort of difficulty which might be associated with the loss of front teeth in a punch-up, either at an airport or backstage. The latest possible date on which Duke and Lawrence could have fought in a continental European airport is 25 November, when they played in Bristol on the day after a Sacred Concert in Barcelona. If we include Britain in Europe (as I do though the *JJ* journalist may not), the latest date becomes 1 December, a week later, when they flew home to the USA from England. The Caesar's Palace residency began on 19 December, and Ken Vail states (p370) that Lawrence handed in his notice a week later, on 26th. New DESOR lists two NBC broadcasts from the residency, on 31 December and 1 January, and also a CBS telecast (*The Red Skelton Show*) dating from 15/17 December,

immediately before the band went to Las Vegas. All are unissued, but Lawrence's presence is noted on all three, and the Italians only document recordings they have heard.

The European airport version of the story of the fight seems most unlikely, given Lawrence's later playing and recording activities through December and into January. The backstage version is also problematic, since it is difficult to square with the evidence of his *Tippytoeing* solo on the 7 January Fantasy session. What would precipitate a fight between the two men in the narrow time-frame between 7 and 8 January, when Lawrence, after working his notice, was on the point of leaving the band anyway, along with several others? An obvious reason for their departure is an understandable wish to avoid another long-distance international tour so soon after the European one in November, and it is unlikely that Duke was unaware of the imminent exodus until 7th.

The fuzziness about the detail of this tale suggests an inclination to make light of factual accuracy, in order to get to the juicy bit. There's no surprise about that. Two of the storytellers are a journalist and a journo-biographer. What the story needs is confirmation and clarification from its source, if that is still possible 45 years later.

Unfortunately, it seems it is not. The tellers of the tale are coy about even naming the source, so it's impossible to check the details. It seems the tale will continue to circulate, unreferenced and with varying amounts of embroidery, until the source is dead, with carefully protected sensitivities intact, but no longer in a position to explain the inconsistencies.



Correction

In my article *Weely* in *BL* 22/3 I gave the impression that *Lotus Blossom* was an Ellington composition. This of course is wrong. Like all the other compositions on the *And His Mother Called Him Bill* LP, *Lotus Blossom* is by Billy. Sorry about that. RB

Eunice Malloch and Jack Kinsey

Two DESUK Life Members died within a few hours of each other on Friday 3rd July. Eunice Malloch in St Anne's Hospice, Cheadle and Jack Kinsey in a Manchester hospital.

Eunice, who was in her late 70s, was not only a great jazz enthusiast (and a committee member of Manchester Jazz Society) but also, with her late husband John, a widely-respected promoter of live jazz. They met at Manchester's famous Club 43 where John managed the accounts and Eunice prepared the club's snacks and pasta meals. Their wedding reception was held there in 1968. They subsequently booked a staggering array of international jazz stars (many of whom stayed at their home overnight) at various venues including the Birch Hall Hotel in Oldham. This was the venue for Ellington '85 and '88 where they both gave unstinting help to the organising committees. They will be remembered for (almost) single-handedly constructing the Cotton Club stage in 1988.

Jack, who was in his late 80s, was arguably Manchester's keenest jazz fan, to be seen at almost all live sessions from the 1950s until a few months before his death. He was also a regular foreign traveller, attending jazz festivals and cruises. He attended almost all of the international Ellington conferences from Oldham 1985 to Woking 2012. Jack was a qualified piano teacher, initially at Manchester School of Music and latterly taking private pupils at his home in Withington.

Both Eunice and Jack were early applicants when DESUK life membership was launched and lost no opportunity to promote our Society. They will be sorely missed.

Peter Caswell

Donations

On behalf of the Society I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following who have given a donation since April of this year

Nick Campailla
Wayne Clutton
Nigel Haines
Frank Harvey
David Marks
Geoff Smith
Roger Smithson
Ulverston Jazz Appreciation Society

Grant Elliot (Treasurer)

**Minutes of the DESUK Committee Meeting 12 noon
on Saturday 11th July 2015 at the Civil Service Club,
13-15 Great Scotland Yard, London, SW1A 2HJ**

Present: Geoff Smith, Chris Addison, Ian Bradley, Quentin Bryar, Peter Caswell, Mike Coates, Grant Elliot, Frank Harvey, Antony Pepper.
Observer: Roger Boyes

1. Chairman's opening remarks Proceedings started by GS asking PC to pay tribute to three senior members of the society who had died recently: Jack Kinsey (Member No. 22) who was known for attending virtually every jazz event, conference and cruise, Manchester jazz promoter Eunice Malloch, and, most important to DESUK, Catherine Coates, who PC said was absolutely superb as Secretary from 2010 onwards but was so much more than that. MC spoke about Catherine's illness and funeral, and thanked friends and DESUK members on her and the family's behalf for their thoughts and kindness. GS called for a period of quiet and reflection. GS then listed a variety of topics for the new committee to consider in future including fundamental matters to ensure the Society continues.

2. Apologies for Absence George Duncan

3. Draft Minutes of Saturday 18th April 2015 Already circulated, these were approved.

4. Matters arising:

(a) New publicity/membership leaflet An updated wall chart of Ellington band membership chronology was discussed, with CA to plan art work. A proposal was carried for a leaflet for potential new members to be put together by MC in consultation with AP. GS raised the possibility of a new DESUK logo. **(b) Matt Cooper visit** GS, PC and AP summarised plans in London, possibly Eastleigh, Birmingham, Manchester and (via GD) Scotland. PC produced a list of available RNCM and Chethams dates in Manchester and noted institutions need confirmation in September of events planned for the following Easter term.

5. Officers Reports (a) Treasurer GE said he was still trying to get to grips with the nuances of the accounts and planned to simplify the system, with a forecast to year end, a budget and a 3 year plan to come at the next meeting. His underlying feeling was that income is declining. VL meanwhile had circulated the latest bank statement. A proposal that new cheque signatories should be GE and GS, plus the retention of current signatories PC and Roger Boyes, was approved. **(b) BL Editor** IB's written report covered the proposed paper upgrade including its cost and possible measures to reduce the print run, the relationship between BL and the website, and the planned BL 22/3 Billy Strayhorn edition. GS said these needed thorough investigation. A proposal to give IB freedom to go ahead with an expanded Strayhorn edition was approved. **(c) Vice Chairman** PC said he had nothing to add. **(d) Publicity** CA reported on

measures to keep contacts in the loop, and said he was making more phone calls as opposed to email contact. CA to pursue question of custody of the Queen's Suite with Buckingham Palace. **(e) Membership** MC referred to his written report and put on record thanks to Victor Lawrence for his work on the membership list. MC noted there was no formal system for reporting on what was happening with members (their demise, arrears etc). MC said members would appreciate a renewal form in the last BL of the year and raised the possibility of a 'membership matters' corner. GS said this would be left to MC and IB to discuss. **(f) Meetings Organiser/Website** AP reported that the website was up to date and said offers to take it in other directions would be discussed off committee. There was no news on the next concert/AGM.

6. AGM Report/Costs GS said something went wrong financially with the AGM/concert. AP said the event went as planned, with hiring the venue the big cost. GE put the expense in the context of the cost of BL issues and the number of members attending the AGM. GS said how to proceed would be brought up at the next meeting. AP noted that events such as the Pizza Express concert were not just for DESUK members,

7. Standing Agenda Items (a) Future of the Society/Committee Structure The question of the financial drain on the Society from Life Members who effectively receive Blue Light for free was discussed. GS said proposals on how to engage the membership should be worked out with AP and IB, with something to be brought to the next meeting. **(b) Recommendations on Constitutional change** GS said this would be discussed at the next meeting. GE suggested GS as chairman should make suggestions to update the constitution.

8. Associate membership and other Ellington societies IB said he had been in correspondence with Ellington societies overseas and raised the possibility of sending them copies of BL, perhaps encouraging new members. GS agreed that IB should do as he sees fit. GE raised the possibility of charging people overseas just to receive BL rather than for full membership.

9. Events listing email GS noted VL had got into some difficulty by inadvertently including email addresses in event-listing updates and said we must make sure to use Bcc (blind carbon copy) to avoid this. AP said with members' permission we might produce a list of members and their addresses so that they can contact each other.

10. Dates of Future Meetings The next committee meeting was set for Saturday 5th December at 1pm, venue TBC

11. Any Other Business GS said committee members' expenses should be discussed at the next meeting.

GS declared the meeting closed at 2.13 pm.

Quentin Bryar 13th July 2015

