

# BLUE LIGHT

THE JOURNAL OF THE DUKE ELLINGTON SOCIETY UK

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**Sheffield Jazz Society:**  
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Contact. Edmund Gregory: 0114 230 3742

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# Editorial

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Whilst the 'UK' in DESUK is our home address rather than a statement of the limits of our interests in Duke Ellington (our aim to be a truly international society), nevertheless, it is very rewarding, once in a while, to take a look at Ellington's legacy from a purely parochial perspective.

Such an opportunity presents itself in this issue thanks to the kindness of Joan Bellerby, widow of our late Chairman, Vic. At the AGM last year, Joan gave me a folder which contained clippings and photocopies of her husband's writings. Amongst them was a piece she thought previously unpublished on the sacred concert held at Coventry Cathedral in February, 1966. The fiftieth anniversary of that performance seems the perfect time to publish it here and it forms part of a wider collage celebrating Ellington's trip to the UK. I am very grateful, further, to DESUK member Peter Bevan who, quite coincidentally, sent me some other material from that period. We are pleased to include two additional articles from the contemporary press and some illustrative material. Many thanks, Peter.

Did you attend the events in Liverpool and Coventry in 1966 and have memories to share with our readers? If so, we would be delighted to hear from you. Indeed, we are always delighted to hear from you on any aspect of Ellingtonia.

I hope readers expecting to find the second part of Matt Cooper's piece on Ellington the pianist will not be too disappointed by its absence from this issue. Matt has many demands on his time and – like all our contributors – gives of his time and talents freely for *Blue Light*. We needed to wait just a little longer for the article to be finished. I am sure it will be more than worth it. It will be published in the next edition timed appropriately with his visit to the UK. Details of this are on our Events page.

*Ian Bradley*

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## Heureux Qui Comme Ulysse....

DESUK life member Ulysses La Pradde, of the Bronx in New York, died on 13 September last, aged 97. He was uniquely dedicated to the legacy of Duke Ellington, and a man of extraordinary generosity of spirit.

Ulysses, whose presence was as striking as his name, was a pillar of strength to our sister society in New York, TDES, though he never held office in that society. He set up the tradition of the annual

pilgrimage to Duke's grave in Woodlawn Cemetery, and made the arrangements. When the plot needed tending, he dug into his pockets to ensure the work was done.

He was a faithful attender and a generous supporter of the annual Ellington conferences on both sides of the Atlantic, though he never served, I think, on the organizing committee of any. At Copenhagen in 1992 he made it his business to seek out and visit the grave of Ben Webster.

Ulysses established the principle that a proportion of a financially successful conference's proceeds should be passed on to the organizers of the next one, as seed money. I didn't realize until I chaired the Leeds committee for the 1997 gathering that he also gave a generous personal contribution, as soon as the preparatory work was securely in progress and the financial arrangements established.

On the hectic registration afternoon at the start of the conferences, Ulysses was always one of the first to arrive, not merely to sign in and receive his 'welcome' pack, but to assist. 'What would you like me to do?' was his greeting, proffered with a warm smile. When I learned of his death I asked my wife, who effectively ran the front desk at Ellington'97, and who had only been to one earlier conference, in Manhattan in 1993, if she recalled Ulysses. 'Of course I do', was her immediate reply.

Ulysses was an active member of the congregation of St Peter's Church, on Lexington Avenue at 54<sup>th</sup> Street, where TDES meet, and where Pastor John Gensel was the shepherd of the night flock, ministering to the city's jazz community. When Pat and I went to John's evening service there after the end of Ellington'93, Ulysses was serving as a sidesman. Pastor Gensel's widow and two sons were present, and spoke, at the memorial service on 30 September.

World War Two was the spur. Ulysses was a sergeant at an army base, and his responsibilities included entertainment. This brought him into direct contact with Duke, Lena Horne and others, in an organization still awash with racial prejudice. In Duke's case the initial contact developed into lifelong friendship, and eventually Ulysses' unstinting support of activities dedicated to the perpetuation of the Ellington legacy.

Du Bellay's celebrated invocation of the old man contentedly looking back over a long and productive journey through life begins: 'Heureux qui comme Ulysse a fait un beau voyage'. Ulysses La Pradde has truly completed a beautiful journey through life, and has gone, happy, to meet his maker.

**Roger Boyes**

# NEW YORK, NEW YORK...



**The 24th International Duke Ellington Study Group Conference** convenes from 19- 23 May, 2016. The following topics have so far been announced:

*(If) A Drum Is A Woman, Where Is Billy Strayhorn?  
Ellington On Broadway*

*Ellington On Film*

*Arranging Ellington*

*The Legacy: Keeping It Alive*

Luminaries who will be present include: Herb Boyd, cultural critic, *New York Amsterdam News*; Phil Schaap; Carmen De Lavallade who played Madam Zajj in the original telecast of *Drum*; David Alan Bunn, Broadway arranger/composer; Julie Malnig, dance and theatre scholar; Will Friedwald; John Hasse; Loren Schoenberg.

#### **Schedule: Thursday, May 19th**

3:00pm-5:00pm Early Conference Registration the Paley Center for Media (25 West 52 Street)

Screening of *A Drum Is A Woman*

6:30pm-7:30pm Conference Registration continues, Peter's Church

7:30pm-8:30pm Gala Reception and Introductions

8:30pm-9:30pm Musical Performance The Duke Ellington Centre Big Band

#### **Friday, May 20th**

9:30am Conference Registration continues

10:00am-6:00pm, panels and presentations at the Mist Harlem, 46 West 116 Street

Dinner Break

8:00pm-Midnight Ellington Musical Performances (Venues and Artists to be announced)

#### **Saturday, May 21st**

9:30am-12:30pm Guided Bus Tour of the Duke's Harlem - The Apollo, the Jazz Museum, the Cotton Club, Duke Ellington Boulevard, the Duke Ellington Statue, and more.

Lunch Break

2:00pm-7:00pm Panels and Presentations: St. Peter's 'The Jazz' Church

Dinner Break

8:00pm -Midnight Ellington Musical Performances (Venues and Artists to be announced)

#### **Sunday, May 22nd**

10:00am-11:00am Future Study Group Conference sites discussion

11:30am-1:30pm The Beyond Category Awards Brunch -The Harlem Mist, 46 West 116 Street (Honourees will be drawn from the fields of education, performance, fashion, literature, painting and philanthropy.)

2:00pm-4:00pm The laying of a wreath at Duke Ellington's gravesite, Woodlawn Cemetery

5:00pm-6:00pm Jazz Vespers, St. Peter's Church



**The 24th International Duke Ellington  
Study Group Conference**

# Forum

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Dear Editor

Appreciation like Tony Charlton's kind observations in the last *Blue Light* is always welcome. We writers for *BL* are lucky. Where the music warrants it we can 'stretch out' in a way that *Jazz Journal* reviewers, working to tight editorial constraints, cannot.

Turning to my review of Avid's recent *Ellington Highlights* set, Tony says I should have mentioned the 'bad distortion' on some of this music as it was issued on the 'Red Box' 24-CD set. I'm afraid I couldn't do this. I have that set as well as the Avid, but I'm just not interested in such things, and wasn't even aware of the distortion. I don't have a costly and sensitive hi-fi sound system, and when I listen to recorded music, it is not with sound fidelity in mind. I have not compared any of the recordings as presented on the two issues, nor will I.

I thought it right to report that I've read varying opinions about the Avids, but I cannot add anything more to that myself, other than to say, as I often do, that I'm no expert. I recall that some people preferred yet another issue of this music, put out some time ago by a firm whose name began, I think, with a D.

Turning to the November 1943 breakdown takes of *Blue Skies*, I hear an exasperated Rex twice declaim 'What fools these mortals be' (he does not invoke the Lord), as the attempts collected onto track 6 of Circle CCD-101 collapse. On take -3 the breakdown occurs just as Taft is embarking on his solo; the music stops, then Puck's observation is heard, as something of an afterthought. Take -4 breaks down even earlier, and Puck's line follows immediately the closing clatter of Sonny's drums; it sounds testier this time. I agree there is no 'structured phrase' here, but where Tony hears a few noises, I hear the quotation. Fair enough. We must agree to differ.

It is no surprise that Rex was familiar with the quote. He was a writer himself and his Washington DC background was bookish as well as aspirational (his mother published verse). I'm pretty sure it's Rex who plays it. The trumpet solo, cut short on tk -3 and never reached on tk -4, is Taft's as I've said.

The interesting question to me is: how was it passed down from 1943 to 1957, and whose idea was it to round off the *Midsummer Night's Dream* movement of *Such Sweet Thunder* with it? The quote is entirely apt in the context of course, but the fact that Clark doesn't play it on the take which is now being used on reissues of the suite suggests an afterthought, a spur-of-the-moment decision taken between the two takes. Once in though, it stayed, as Clark's instruction to himself written onto his part indicates. The quote is the

composers' intention, and without it I consider the work to be incomplete.

**Roger Boyes**

## From The Treasurer....

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On behalf of the Society I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following members who have given a donation subsequent to the publication of *Blue Light* 22/4

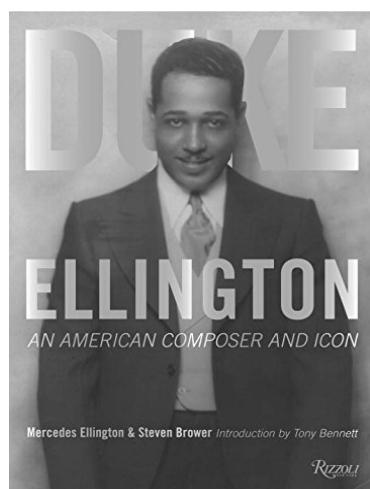
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**Grant Elliot** (Treasurer)

### Membership Renewal 2016

May I remind members who have not yet renewed their membership but intend to do so that subscriptions for 2016 are now due. **GE**

### NEW BOOK FROM MERCEDES ELLINGTON



# 1966 And All That...



« Une poule sur un piano »

## Duke à Goutelas 1966 - 2016 JEUDI 25 FÉVRIER 2016

18 H 00 • Avant-première du documentaire

« Une poule sur un piano » réalisé par Laurent Lukic

19 H 30 • Dîner Old School

20 H 30 • Concert jazz avec Un Certain Trio

Projection + dîner + concert : 28 €

Concert seul : 12 € | Sur réservation



CHATEAU DE GOUTELAS | 42130 MARCOUX | 04 77 97 35 42 | [www.chateaudegoutelas.fr](http://www.chateaudegoutelas.fr)

Thursday, 25 February 2016 saw the première of a new documentary, *Une Poule Sur Un Piano*. Directed by Laurent Luvik, the film is a celebration of the restoration of le Château de Goutelas. It takes its title from the famous photograph, taken for Paris Match, of Duke Ellington, seated at a piano outdoors whilst a hen perches on the edge of the instrument. The film was premièred at the château fifty years to the day of Ellington's appearance there. It was screened as part of an evening entitled *Duke à Goutelas 1966-2016* which also included a dinner and jazz concert with Un Certain Trio.

The occasion of Ellington's appearance at the château seemed to have a profound effect upon him and he devoted an entire chapter of *Music Is My Mistress* to the episode. Restoration of the 18<sup>th</sup> century building was undertaken principally at the behest of criminal lawyer Paul Bouchet. Ellington became involved in the project, promising to perform at the château when it was opened. He was as good as his word and, arriving from Madrid via Geneva, he drove with Bouchet and the artist

Bernard Cathelin to the château. For the last stage of the journey on foot, as he walked into the courtyard, he was accompanied by children bearing torches. Hidden in the shadows, young musicians played the opening of *Black, Brown and Beige*. The occasion moved Ellington to tears. His own solo recital was played upon a Steinway concert piano which had been brought from the Lyon Opera. Following the concert, a banquet was served for 200 people with Ellington as guest of honour.

Ellington's appearance left a rich legacy at Goutelas, too. The restored château is a seminary and cultural centre, its website's opening page, rendering part of Ellington's speech at the opening of the château: *J'ai été accueilli dans une multitude d'endroits divers. Mais jamais dans un lieu comme Goutelas. Je suis heureux et fier d'être ici, une maison bâtie, rebâtie par des gens de bien.*

The idea for the documentary *Une Poule Sur Un Piano* was born in March 2012 when Laurent Lukik read an article in a magazine about Ellington's recital. A subsequent meeting with Laurent Mignard, director of the Duke Orchestra, confirmed Lukik in his intentions to make the film. It took the director four years to trace the history of the reconstruction of the château and to study the social, cultural and economic legacy of Bouchet's vision. In the film, Lukik shows both archival testimonies of the men who rebuilt the house and also testimonies from those who were there for Ellington's performance and who knew the people of the Forez Mountains.

Lukik has said that he hopes the film will raise awareness, question what has been accomplished and encourage understanding of the achievement. Is it an example to follow of how to live together?

The film contains musical extracts from Ellington's recital at le Château and from his subsequent composition *The Goutelas Suite*. At this writing, two 'teaser' trailers for the film are available to view online. How widely the film will be distributed, or available with English subtitles remains to be seen.

*In writing this report, I have made much use of an article in Aartur Magazine (and Google translate!). The article *Une poule sur un piano* may be accessed at this address: <http://www.aartur.com/une-poule-sur-un-piano/> IB*

# Duke Swings In The Aisles

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Some minutes after eight o'clock on Monday evening, Canon Simon Phipps, Industrial Chaplain to the Bishop of Coventry, walked into the nave of Coventry Cathedral to "welcome such distinguished musicians as Duke Ellington and his orchestra."

He told the audience of sixteen hundred ticket holders, plus sundry television personnel and uninvited guests, that he thought it entirely appropriate to applaud music in the cathedral on this occasion.

And applaud the audience did when the Duke walked out to the piano, blue-suited and urbane, to begin his first performance in a British cathedral.

Certainly, for the normally brought-up jazz admirer it was a remarkable occasion. The new cathedral is an impressive building – though not in a way which subdues the spirit – and just to see the Ellington band set up on the Chancel steps, in front of the High Altar and Graham Sutherland's Great tapestry, was a memorable experience.

Hearing them, in a nave which is eighty feet high, eighty wide, and more than three times that in length, was a more powerful experience, though acoustically the lofty hall seemed far from perfect. Anyway, it was an experience that had to be waited for, because Ellington opened the concert with a solo assignment. It

was his *New World A-Comin'* given full and sometimes rhapsodic keyboard treatment: decidedly a rare work from the Forties.

The band was then introduced for *Come Sunday* and the development from *Black, Brown and Beige*. Jimmy Hamilton and the reeds and splashes of Cootie (mercifully returned from the sick bed in time) on trumpet preceded Johnny Hodges' alto statement. Cat Anderson rocketed the audience into the gay, swinging section known as *Light*.

After that a shortish and nicely grave band piece called *Come Easter* was apparently premiered, to be followed by Lawrence Brown and Hodges dueting on a gospel waltz aptly titled *The Truth*. From my seat, the solo horns lost impact in the hollow acoustics. No matter, it was rich programme material, and at this point the pièce de resistance, *In The Beginning, God* was announced.

From near the choir stalls came the bearded Cliff Adams and his choir – ten men and six girls – and soloist George Webb from Trinidad to join the ensemble. There are several sections to *ITBG*, as it is familiarly known, and they are carried in turn by Harry Carney, Jimmy Hamilton, Webb's baritone voice, Paul Gonsalves, the choir and Woodyard's drums.

Other developments occur in an interesting composition which was performed with surprising success in view of the limited rehearsal time for Webb and the Adams singers. This marked the end of the special things for Coventry but Ellington, rapturously received, unleashed a potent pair of encores – *West Indian Pancake* and *La Plus Belle Africaine*.

Since Gonsalves' tenor sounded especially beautiful in this setting (definitely a cathedral cat), the first was a wise choice. And the *Africaine* is weathering well on this trip, though a few hearings still suggest its effectiveness could be heightened by judicious compression.

In every way, Coventry's Ellington concert was an important event. All credit to the churchmen who welcomed it and to ABC-TV who made it possible. It should be on your screens very soon.

... from *Caught in the Act: Melody Maker* 1966

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## Friends I wanna tell ya...

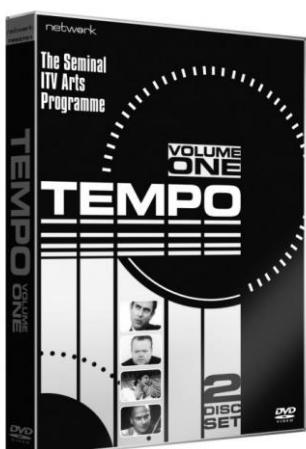
The *TV Times* for Easter Week, 1966 (pictured above) featured an interview with Ellington conducted by Graeme Kay. The article begins:

"In *Celebration*, ITV's Easter day special, American jazz giant Duke Ellington and his orchestra will be seen in Coventry Cathedral offering their music to the glory of God. During his visit to Coventry, "the Duke" talked about what he calls "my greatest work on earth." The choral score that opens the programme was composed by Bob Sharples. Ellington told Sharples he liked it so much that he would keep it as a permanent part of the suite."

Did Duke subsequently perform this composition with Sharples' writing or was this a characteristic example of Ellingtonian flim-flam? Can our readers shed any light on this statement? To members in the UK, 'Uncle Bob' Sharples is perhaps best known for being the musical director for the ubiquitous Hughie Green's TV talent show *Opportunity Knocks*. On learning of the musical director's death in 1987, Hughie Green's agent Pam Jagger said:

"I have such happy memories of long conversations with him about music in general and Duke Ellington in particular." IB

## Reminiscing in...



The entire half hour programme has recently been remastered digitally and released on DVD by Network.

The interview covers Ellington's early influences such as Willie The Lion Smith and James P Johnson; his relationship with Billy Strayhorn; discipline and civil rights issues. It is interspersed with footage of the orchestra in rehearsal at Coventry Cathedral. The documentary is narrated by broadcaster Alan Dell of *Dance Band Days* and *Big Band Sounds* fame.

Ellington's inclusion in the anthology is not advertised particularly well. Whilst the publicity material boasts:

"Unseen for decades, this two-disc set contains interviews, reportage and features on Jacques Tati, Stan Tracey, Tom Jones, Orson Welles, Harold Pinter, Yehudi Menuhin and more," Ellington does not warrant a mention but the entire half hour programme is certainly there and is well worth buying on a DVD coded for region 2 (Europe) and priced, at the time of writing, £8.40.

# STORYVILLE



*Duke Ellington's status as a legend is well-merited. This new release presents the star and his whole orchestra in full vigor at a 1969 Rotterdam concert.*

Duke Ellington & His Orchestra toured Europe in November 1969, a time when Duke was still at the top of his powers. It is a pleasure to be able to issue the whole of an excellent concert recorded in De Doelen Concert Hall in Rotterdam—a venue famous for its splendid acoustics. The ambience is remarkable on this live recording: The audience is audibly enthusiastic and these high spirits influence the band: Duke Ellington and the orchestra gave two concerts on November 7th, and even though this is the second one, the musicians sound nothing but lively and fresh. The repertoire includes classics such as *Take the 'A' Train* and *Don't Get Around Much More* rarely heard as swinging as on this day, vigorous and fresh versions of *Kinda Dukish* and *Rockin' In Rhythm* and the newer 1966 composition *La Plus Belle Africaine*, the centerpiece of the concert.

Among the soloists we find Johnny Hodges (as) playing as beautifully as ever on *Black Butterfly*, only half a year before his death. Other prominent band members such as Cootie Williams (tp), Lawrence Brown (tb), Harry Carney (bar,cl,b-cl) and Paul Gonsalves (ts) are also featured.

The never before released 1969 Rotterdam concert exhibits Duke Ellington & His Orchestra on one of their most intense and enthusiastic nights. Still in a brilliant mood after two concerts, Duke Ellington even played an after-party concert with a quartet—Storyville Records hopes to issue these recordings in the future.

CAT#: 101 8440

# Duke In The Cathedral by Vic Bellerby

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## **Editor's Note:**

*At last year's AGM, I was pleased to be given a folder by Joan Bellerby, wife of former DESUK Chairman Vic Bellerby which contained a sheaf of photocopied articles and some typescripts. Joan wrote on the list of contents, "Vic Bellerby was joint founder of Blue Light (with David Fleming). Some of these pieces might be suitable for reproduction in future editions of Blue Light." One piece which caught my eye was Duke In The Cathedral, a photocopied typescript on which Joan had written '1966 following Coventry Cathedral Concert... unsure where or whether this was published.' We are pleased to present this now... Pitched well above high C, a sequel from Cat Anderson's trumpet climbed above and beyond Graham Sutherland's tapestry, from the chancel steps below warm vibrations from Harry Carney's baritone saxophone shuddered along the aisles, Sam Woodyard's tuned cymbals ricocheted from pillars and statues, their message urgent, like that of a hot gospeller. Framed against the high altar, Duke Ellington, blue suited, urbane, composed, calmly announced the next Ellington composition.*

As Paul Gonsalves might say it was indeed *The Happening*, Duke was playing in Coventry Cathedral.

On Duke Ellington's first British tour in 1933, such an occurrence would have been unthinkable. Indeed, had the Duke band stolen into a holy place and played *Mood Indigo*, there would certainly have been clerical dismissals, questions in the House and thunderings in a *Times* leader. In 1966 Canon Simon Phipps welcomed with dignity and humility "the distinguished music of the Duke Ellington orchestra" and added for good measure that applause was allowed, himself leading a thunderous tumult as Duke strode to his white piano.

The occasion was momentous, the jazz superb, the acoustics, unfortunately, vile, translating the impeccable precision of the Ellington brass into the shambling tones of a third-rate pit orchestra.

Yet the virility of Duke's music gradually overcame this grave disadvantage. The congregation of jazz cognoscenti and (sometimes bewildered) lay members soon warmed to the compositions of jazz's greatest composer and certainly the most original musician produced by the USA.

Indeed, could not a lesson be learned from the sprightly *West Indian Pancake* and the thoughtful *La Plus Belle Africaine*? For here was music warm and pulsing, so different from the dreary, sexless chant of many liturgical dirges.

Two hours before the concert, Ellington laid out the parts of a new composition, *Come Sunday*. Imperturbable as ever, the band played it effortlessly,

as if rendering an old 'standard' – Harry Carney and Jimmy Hamilton swaying beautifully in a cradle of rich ducal trombones. The *New World A-Comin'* was played as a piano solo by the composer. This tender, reflective music acquired a weird, stereophony as it echoed around the great hall, a mood recalling the dreams of *Reminiscing In Tempo* (1936).

The most deeply moving part of the concert was Hodges' long solo in *Come Sunday*. This could hardly be described as a loud saxophone passage, yet the incredible power of the alto-sax filled the vastness of the Cathedral like the tone of a great oratorio soloist. Hodges is at once jazz's greatest alto saxophonist and one of the leading executants of the twentieth century. The congregation was hushed by such sublime mastery.

It was a sad anti-climax that the Cathedral's lamentable acoustics reduced the exciting concluding passages of *Black, Brown and Beige* to a nearly incoherent shambles.

At rehearsal it seemed impossible that *In The Beginning... God* could be resolved in time for the concert as Duke rehearsed George Webb, the Cliff Adam Singers and the orchestra. Yet Ellington's impudent self-confidence triumphed once again. The work progressed with such smoothness and precision, that some lay members of the audience assumed that choir and baritone were an integral part of the Ellington organization. *In The Beginning... God* was a happy conception, neither profound nor sentimental, its gay character stemming seemingly from the West Indian calypso. If it is not a great Ellington work, there were many fine moments – tuneful drumming from Woodyard, brilliant trumpet work from Cat Anderson, choral writing sounding astonishingly like Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* and a beautiful movement where Duke's piano swung lithely against clipped vocal interjections.

After a mild celebration at the Leofric Hotel, the band boarded the coach at 12.30 am, pulling into their London hotel at 3.30 am. They were to be awakened at 7.30 am to catch a plane to Brussels where two concerts awaited them. Such an apparently impossible schedule caused no special comments from the band, being part of normal working conditions. Russell Procope, Paul Gonsalves, Sam Woodyard, indeed all the band slept soundly as the coach rolled on – all except the indefatigable Harry Carney who, for two hours, discussed the concert and the pleasure of working for this unique, collective organization.

After all, Harry Carney should know...  
He joined the band in 1926.

# JAZZ? WHAT'S THAT HE ASKS

By Michael Hardcastle

Daily Express, Tuesday 22 February, 1966

The man who has been called the greatest talent in jazz denied in Liverpool last night that the word "jazz" even exists.

"Jazz? What does the word mean? It means absolutely nothing." Duke Ellington told me before going out to face a massive audience in Liverpool University's Mountford Hall for the second time in three hours.

"All right, it's a category. But the word baffles me, yeah, it stinks.

"It's all music. Music is a noise that either annoys or one enjoys. Hey, that's good, put it down, it's good."

The sad face of the 66-years-old maestro for once beamed real pleasure; he looked happy, he looked younger. He raised himself an inch or two from the couch in a tiny eyrie somewhere above the concert hall. His hand brushed the blue silk turban that covered his greying hair and matched his sweater; the rest of him was swathed in detergent white blankets. The Duke was resting – officially.

In a room that was electrically hotter than any of his music this gentle genius of jazz (well, it's what everybody else insists on calling it) ambled vocally, if not always logically, through responses that either bored him or pleased him.

"This audience tonight? Wonderful! But they're no different from any others we get – all artists have their own audiences. They come to hear what we're identified with. We have blocks of identification; old jazz things, old pops – yeh, *Mood Indigo*, *Satin Doll* – about 20 of them. Big instrumental numbers.

"The majority thing, our number one objective, is to present our instrumentalists. We've got this tremendous payroll of them – we have to show them off.

"In the States we have all kinds of audiences in all kinds of places. In England we are confined to nothing but concerts. They're musically mature audiences here. Our approach? We play to them as if they've never heard of us anyway."

For the big men in the world's big bands, it's all go, go, get up and go. Endless travel. Don't they ever get tired of it?

"What does anybody in the world want to do?" Ellington asks plaintively. "They have a day off, so they want to travel around. So I have a combination of everybody's holiday – and I come home just as tired."

Wearily, in that sweltering room, he relaxed again, hand over eyes – only to straighten up once more to praise the Beatles.

"I've never met them, though once I recall I was on an Ed Sullivan Show and they were on, too. I think their music was taped. Yeah, they are wonderful, they've done a lot for the entertainment industry. We've recorded a couple of their tunes on my album *Ellington 66 – I Wanna Hold Your Hand* and *All My Loving*."

A vastly busy man is Duke Ellington. He has his own show currently in Detroit, is writing all the time, has just completed a ballet for Canada ("pretty elaborate, pretty expensive, but they've got plenty of money in Canada") and has just finished the music for a new Frank Sinatra film, *Assault On A Queen*, which Ellington describes whimsically as "a good Western."

But back to that elusive word jazz which he now defines as "freedom of expression" – which is surely right. Are youngsters being given the right encouragement to enjoy it from an early age?

He launches into a long rigmarole about "money and the social thing" coming before art, the need to get into the right social swim, the fact that a boy likes a girl or a girl likes a boy and that's greater than anything else. Jazz has disappeared again.

Once, I say, an eminent critic who praised you and your music greatly, said the only criticism he had of the Ellington sound was that it was too sweet or too lush. How about that?

From his horizontal position Duke shrugs. "I have no objection to that it's very complimentary. To force oneself away from one's own sound is dishonest. This is not a criticism, this is his taste. Look, I like six lumps of sugar and cream in my tea – now that's my taste."

The call boy says it's almost time to go. I ask about Civil Rights – is Mr Ellington campaigning?

"When did all this start," he says, rather than asks. "I did *Jump For Joy* in 1941, before that, 1938, I think, a socially significant opera, before that, oh, 1931 ...

"Look, I never had Federal troops. I never needed them. We presented ourselves as artists. That's sufficient."

Duke Ellington, artist extraordinary, got off his couch and went back on stage.

*With special thanks to Peter Bevan (DESUK) for extracts from The Daily Express, melody maker and TV Times and Tony Charlton (DESUK) for additional information.*

# Harold Ashby (As Leader) On Record: 1978-2003

## By Grant Elliot

From the years 1978 up to his death in 2003 Harold Ashby recorded 9½ albums as leader, of which eight are of the tenor saxophone-plus-rhythm variety. Interestingly, all eight are with a different piano player and this is what makes them appealing (some more so than others).

Over the years *Blue Light* has contained a review of a few of them, often the review not corresponding with the timing of the albums' release. This article is written as an attempt to supplement these reviews and consolidate the entire output of Harold Ashby as leader following Duke's death in 1974. I own and have listened to all nine albums (mainly due to my CCD (Compulsive Completist Disorder)) but I am not suggesting that you, the reader, go out and purchase them all, although all, I believe, are currently available, but may take some searching out. However, if you wish, the discography and associated comment below may help you to be selective. In the main I have also tried to avoid the inevitable temptation to comment on the Webster/Gonsalves comparisons.

In addition to his albums as leader, Harold Ashby featured on many albums during this period with other artists, including Scott Hamilton, Warren Vaché, Benny Golson and others, and I have listed them as a coda to this article. Maybe they may form the basis of a full discography and analysis at a later date.

**Scufflin'**: Mitchell "Booty" Wood (tb); Harold Ashby (ts); Raymond Fol (p); Aaron Bell (b); Sam Woodyard (d). Paris, 17 May 1978.

**Black & Blue (F): 33139 (LP); BB932.2(CD)**

*Scufflin'; Salty Mama; Get Down; Earma Jean; Stealin'; Quiet Nights; Scufflin' (alt take – CD only); When Sunny Gets Blue*

Other than an obscure MJR 1959/60 album recorded for Stanley Dance this is Ashby's first album as leader for nearly twenty years and here we find him teamed up with three other Ellington alumni. This album presents Ashby's warm tenor on both ballads and jumping originals. Surprisingly, Ashby at times adds a Johnny Hodges type feel to the session with his relaxed vibrato and cascading style. Booty Wood's fine trombone playing adds well to the mix



and Raymond Fol (his last session), the only non Ellingtonian, proves to be a more than adequate substitute.

**Quickie: Presenting The Harold Ashby**

**Quartet:** Harold Ashby (ts); Don Friedman (p); George Mraz (b); Ronnie Bedford (d). NYC, 7 August 1978. **Progressive PRO-7040 (LP); PCD-7040 (CD)**

*Candy; Quickie; (There Is) No Greater Love; Dainty; Over The Rainbow; Pleading; Days Of Wine And Roses; Couscous; There Is No Greater Love (alt take); Days Of Wine And Roses (alt take); Pleading (alt take); Dainty (alt take). All alt takes – CD only*

The CD issue of this album was not issued until late 2013 or early 2014 and contains four alternate takes which add nothing overall to the album. Ashby is in his relaxed quartet mode playing a mixture of standards (no Ellington tunes) and originals here with a first class all American rhythm section but George Mraz's swinging bass at times seems, to me, to be over recorded. This is Ashby doing what Ashby does, playing tenderly but powerfully when he has to. Although a good album, it does not greatly enhance the Ashby discography.

**The Viking:** Harold Ashby (ts); Norman Simmons (p); Paul West (b); Garriyck King (d).

Oslo, 4 August, 1988. **Gemini GMLP 60 (LP); GMCD 60 (CD)**

*The Viking; Hash; I Got It Bad....; Whispering; Tasty; Solitude; Rose Room; Simplicity*

Ten years after the previous recording we find Ashby again in a quartet, but this time at his best and his breathy Websterian tone is as good as, if not better than, ever. Recorded for the Norwegian Gemini label, four of the tracks are Ashby originals, two Ellington tracks and two standards; they form a perfect mixture. Norman Simmons is the ideal accompanist, given extended solos from time to time and Ashby feels at ease with this rhythm section. If anything, this is a better rhythm section for Ashby than the albums above and in fact, all in all it is a superior album, well worth digging out.

**What Am I Here For?:** Harold Ashby (ts); Mulgrew Miller (p); Rufus Reid (b); Ben Riley (d). NYC, 30 November 1990 **Criss Cross, Criss 1054 (CD)**

*I Can't Get Started; What Am I Here For?; Mood Indigo; Frankie And Johnny; Once In A While; Poinciana ; C Jam Blues; Prelude To A Kiss; September In The Rain; Perdido*

Another quartet record and again with a distinguished all American rhythm section. Mulgrew Miller is an unusual choice as piano accompanist, and has a more modern and percussive style, but it works here. As usual we have a mixture of Ellington associated tunes (5 in all) and standards but this time no originals. For Ashby enthusiasts this may be considered as good as it gets.

**Wild Bill Davis / Harold Ashby – Out Of Nowhere:** Harold Ashby (ts); Wild Bill Davis (org); Vinnie Johnson (d). Paris, 2 February, 1991. **Black & Blue BB.2/215 (CD)**

*Out Of Nowhere; Blue And Sentimental; When You're Smiling; Memories Of You; Just Squeeze Me; In A Sentimental Mood*

**Note:** On the remaining tracks (*One For Sysmo; Now's The Time; You Stepped Out Of A Dream; I'll Remember April; Yesterdays; Have You Met Miss Jones ?*) recorded on the same date Harold Ashby is omitted.

This is the “<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>” album referred to in the first paragraph. I have to admit that I do not own this one, nor have I listened to it but it is included here for the sake of completeness. Comments are based upon

Mike Shera's review in *Jazz Journal* of January 1997.

In his review Mike states that “none of the excellent standards that follow seem to inspire anything but quite mundane solos from Davis.” He does feel that Ashby makes a success of the other tracks and on *Blue And Sentimental* he likens him to Herschel Evans. Of Davis, the reviewer considers that “Wild Bill seems to have had a bit of an off day”.

**I'm Old Fashioned:** Harold Ashby (ts); Richard Wyands (p); Aaron Bell (b); Connie Kay (d). NYC, 25 July 1991. **Stash ST-CD-545 (CD)**

*Dash; All Of Me; Forever; Coquette; Struttin' With Some Barbeque; St. Louis Blues; I'm Old Fashioned; Deed I Do; If I Had You; Memories Of You*

All in all this is another excellent album and Ashby seems to be in top form with more than a passing acknowledgement to Ben Webster and some old fashioned R&B thrown in. Richard Wyands is another of the perfect pianists for Ashby and on bass he is united again with fellow Ellingtonian Aaron Bell (they never recorded together with the Duke) and MJQ drummer, Connie Kay. A truly stellar rhythm section.

**On The Sunny Side Of The Street:** Harold Ashby (ts); Horace Parlan (p); Wayne Dockery (b); Steve McRaven (d). Monster, Holland, 12 January 1992. **Timeless CD SJP 385 (CD)**

*Out Of Nowhere; There Is No Greater Love; Honeysuckle Rose; Pennies From Heaven; It's The Talk Of The Town; Satin Doll; These Foolish Things (Remind Me Of You); On The Sunny Side Of The Street; Scufflin'; In My Solitude; Just Squeeze Me*

Yet another quartet album, the mix similar to before – beautiful ballads, stomping up tempo numbers, blues and three Ellington standards. If you asked me to pick a rhythm section for Ashby, it would not have been this one, straight from the Archie Shepp band, and they all seem out of place and both Parlan and the drummer do not seem to fit. Nevertheless Ashby rises above all this and excels throughout in spite of the failing attempts of his colleagues to conform.

**Harold Ashby Plays Duke Ellington:** Harold Ashby (ts); Lloyd Mayers (p); Earl May (b); Leroy Williams (d). NYC, 13 November 1998. **Y'all Y'ALL-03 (CD)**

*Just Squeeze Me; Mood Indigo; Black & Tan Fantasy; Sophisticated Lady; Ducally; Satin*

**Doll; Medley: Solitude/I Got It Bad..../In A Sentimental Mood; I'm Beginning To See The Light; Four Kisses; BP**

Reviewed briefly in *BL* 8/2 and again the catalyst for a fuller article on Harold Ashby by Roger Boyes in *BL* 17/1 in 2010 this is probably the one of most interest to *Blue Light* readers. Two originals, the remainder being Ellington compositions. This time we have a rhythm team who support Ashby, in particular drummer Leroy Williams and his artful use of brushes. In all bar one track (*I'm Beginning To See The Light*) the tempos are either medium or slow. Is this the best of the Ashby albums? – No, I don't think so, but still worth seeking out.

**Just For You:** Harold Ashby (ts); John Hicks (p); Keter Betts (b); Jimmy Cobb (d). Upper Marlboro MD. 29 and 30 December 1998.

**Mapleshead 06232 (CD)**

*Reminiscing; Stampash; Lotus Blossom; Forever; Tasty; Just For You; Next; The Intimacy Of The Blues; Sultry Serenade; Sweet Nuthins*

Mainly originals, and again supported by a good trio, in particular pianist John Hicks. *The Penguin Guide To Jazz Recordings* – ninth edition (2008) states that *Just For You* is Ashby's last record (actually, it is not), and the comment is that “he's frail and tired, which adds some poignancy to *Lotus Blossom*, though elsewhere the rhythm section blows straight past him.”. I can see the author's point, and tend to agree, but this was recorded only a month after the Ellington album above. Strange.

**Ash:** Harold Ashby (ts); Hilton Ruiz (p); Andy McCloud (b), Victor Jones (d). NYC, 19 December, 2000. **Y'all Y'ALL-07 (CD)**

*Hash; Ash; Blueash; Suckatash; Gloomash; Swingtrain; Get Down; Dash; Erica; Bash*

Reviewed by Roger Boyes in *BL* 13/3 (2006) here we have a programme consisting entirely of originals and see Ashby teamed up with yet another top flight pianist (where does he find them?). I know Roger's limited enthusiasm for tenor quartet recordings; nevertheless he still recommended this one “to all lovers of the tenor saxophone, and a very tasty dish for Ashby enthusiasts”. I am not so sure. Whilst Ashby's playing is technically competent there is not enough interest to justify nearly an hour of listening in one sitting.

**Other recordings featuring Harold Ashby:**

In order to complete Harold Ashby's discography the following is a listing of albums (CD) which feature Ashby (not including recordings with Duke's posthumous orchestra) made during the same period although he is not leader and may not be playing on every track.

(Sourced from my own collection or *The Jazz Discography* by Tom Lord Version 16.0)

**Butch Miles: Butch's Encore.** Late 1977 early 1978 (Famous Door HL 124)

**Cat Anderson: Plays W C Handy.** Paris, 5 May 1978 (Black & Blue (F) 59.163 2)

**Mitchell "Booty" Wood: Chelsea Bridge.** Paris, 6 & 16 May, 1978 (Black & Blue (F) BB914-2)

Note: These two albums plus *Scufflin'* above and another under the leadership of Norris Turney (Black & Blue (F) BB931-2) (no Ashby) form a quartet of albums with similar personnel recorded over an eleven day period in Paris in May, 1978.

**Scott Hamilton: Skyscrapers.** NYC, 6 July 1979 (Concord CCD-4111)

**Bennie Wallace: The Art Of The Saxophone** NYC, 7/8 February 1987 (Denon (J) 33CY-1648)

Note: Ashby is on only 2 of the tracks.

**Newport Jazz Festival All Stars: European Tour.** Bern, Switzerland, 2 May 1987 (Concord CCD-4343)

Note: Ashby out on 2 of the tracks.

**Clark Terry: Berne Baby, Berne!** Bern, Switzerland, April 30, 1988 (Village (G) VIL CD 2001-2)

(Note: Ashby is on only 1 track, all other tracks by different leaders)

**Chris Barber's Jazz & Blues Band:** Enschede, The Netherlands, 9 Jan 1992 (GB Private (DU) GBCB-69) (Note: Ashby is on only 4 of the tracks)

**Milt Hinton: Laughing At Life.** NYC, 1994 (Columbia CK 66454)

(Note: Ashby is on only 4 of the tracks)

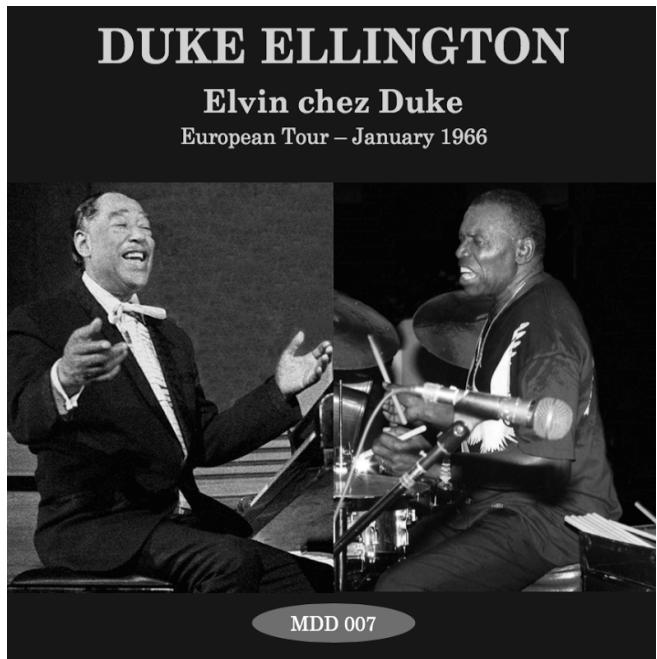
**Benny Golson: Tenor Legacy.** NYC, 29/30 January 1996 (Arkadia Jazz 70742)

(Note: Ashby is on only half of the tracks)

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# Review



## DUKE ELLINGTON ELVIN CHEZ DUKE

Take The 'A'Train; Black And Tan Fantasy/ Creole Love Call/ The Mooche; Chelsea Bridge; El Viti; La Plus Belle Africaine; Trombonio-Bustoso-Isimo (Trombone Buster); Passion Flower; Things Aint What They Used To Be; Wings And Things; introducing Harry Belafonte/ Take The 'A'Train; Ad Lib On Nippon (65:56)

Cat Anderson, Herbie Jones, Mercer Ellington, Cootie Williams (tp); Lawrence Brown, Buster Cooper (tbn); Chuch Connors (btb); Johny Hodges (as); Russell Procope (cl, as); Jimmy Hamilton (cl, ts); Paul Gonsalves (ts); Harry Carney (bcl, bar); Duke Ellington (p, cond); John Lamb (b); Elvin Jones, Skeets Marsh (d); Norman Granz (master of ceremonies)

Tks 1- 10 Salle Pleyel, Paris, 29 January, 1966, second concert

Tk 11 Same personnel, date and location, 1st concert

Tk 12 Same personnel, Jahrhunderthalle, Frankfurt, January 28, 1966

This new compact disc is issued as a free gift (with 5 euros necessary for shipping costs) to those joining La Maison du Duke, an online association presided over by Christian Bonnet and Claude Carrière which has strong links to Laurent Mignard's Duke Orchestra.

The main dish is a large portion of the second house concert at Salle Pleyel, Paris, on 29 January 1966. The rest of the concert – not included on the disc – featured Ella Fitzgerald and Jimmy Jones. The concert took place as part of the Orchestra's tour of Europe which included the performance of sacred music at Coventry Cathedral and culminated in Ellington's solo performance at Goutelas-En-Foret discussed elsewhere in this issue.

The tour began with some difficulty over filling the drum chair, vacated recently by Louie Bellson. Ellington began the tour with Skeets Marsh at the drums but decided to replace him on tour, sending for Elvin Jones, erstwhile drummer with the John Coltrane quartet, who joined the band for a concert in Frankfurt. Unhappy with playing in tandem with Marsh, according to Ken Vail's *Duke's Diary*, Jones returned to the USA after playing only four concerts. Ellington subsequently sent for Sam Woodyard, whose drum kit La Maison du Duke, coincidentally, has recently purchased. (Was this the drum kit presented to Sam by the delegates at Oldham 88, one wonders?)

Jones's reputation for being the loudest drummer in jazz is evident in his performance here, the percussionist making his presence felt throughout the set, pounding out the rhythm like a pile driver. He engineers much excitement in the brass breaks, for example, in *La Plus Belle Africaine*, accentuating the drama with great splashy strokes on the cymbals. Is it my imagination or does Cootie Williams in particular in his solos seem to respond to these callisthenic excesses with an enthusiasm almost Vaudevillian in its exuberance?

Sonically, the disc is not in the same league as the recent release by Storyville of the Rotterdam concert from 1969, but the fidelity is more than acceptable, the recording being rendered in a rudimentary stereo. The music, of course, is first class and notable for the rare appearance by Elvin Jones. As far as I can tell, Ellington premiered *La Plus Belle Africaine* during the first house at Salle Pleyel so this disc also offers us what is so far the composition's earliest performance to be released. Well worth seeking out. **IB**

Our Vice Chairman and former Chairman Peter Caswell is leaving the committee at the AGM which means there will be at least one new committee member required. Why not volunteer? Phone Chairman Geoff Smith on 01395 742760 for a chat.

## DUKE ELLINGTON THE TREASURY SHOWS VOL.20

**CD1:** Take The 'A' Train; <sup>1</sup>A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing; Bond Promo; Main Stem; A Ghost Of A Chance<sup>#</sup>; Interview with DE; In A Jam; I'm Just A Lucky So And So<sup>+</sup>; Stomp, Look And Listen; <sup>1</sup>Come Rain Or Come Shine\*; Bond Promo; Things Ain't What They Used To Be; Summertime<sup>+</sup>; Jack The Bear; Sentimental Lady (I Didn't Know About You); In A Mellotone; Rockin' In Rhythm (47:34)

**CD2:** Take The 'A' Train Mood To Be Wooed; Bond Promo; Johnny Come Lately; <sup>1</sup>They Say It's Wonderful\*; Strange Love; Honeysuckle Rose; Don't Take Your Love From Me<sup>+</sup>; Bond Promo; Blues On The Double; Take The 'A' Train; Take The 'A' Train; Come Sunday; Light; Bond Promo; Lover Man<sup>#</sup>; Riff Staccato<sup>^</sup>; Mood Indigo; Bond Promo; Riff 'N' Drill; Johnny Come Lately; Emancipation Celebration; Go Away Blues<sup>@</sup>; Don't Get Around Much Anymore; Things Ain't What They Used To Be (67:45)

CDs 1/2 personnels. 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 (<sup>1</sup>Billy Strayhorn) (p), Fred Guy (g), Oscar Pettiford (b), Sonny Greer (d); Kay Davis\*, Marion Cox<sup>#</sup>, Al Hibbler<sup>+</sup>, Ray Nance<sup>^</sup> (vo)

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<sup>@</sup>, Al Hibbler<sup>+</sup> (vo)

CD1: tks 1-12, bc Paramount Theatre NYC, 1 June 1946. tks 13-17, bc Hurricane Restaurant NYC, 10 September 1943.

CD2: tks 1-20, bc WEEU Studio Reading PA, 8 June 1946. tks 21-25, bc Hurricane Restaurant NYC, 7 September 1943.

**DETS 903 9020**

Storyville's Treasury reissues reach the June 1946 Shows in this twentieth volume, and one feels the end will soon be in sight. At Reading on 8 June the band was already heading west, and the broadcasts would not resume until early July when it reached Los Angeles. If you have vols. 18, 19 and this one, you have all the surviving recorded Ellingtonia from spring 1946. There's nothing on Victor and there are no other airchecks. As on vol. 19, two early September 1943 Hurricane broadcasts are included as fillers, and as CD1 is relatively short on content for the series at well under 50 minutes, a third might have been usefully added. If you like to link your CD contents with the *New DESOR* designations, you'll find that the Italians

list tracks 1-12 on CD1 as DE4616a-k, not a-l as you'd expect, since they don't identify separately the brief 'Interview' track (a plug for a magazine).

Personnels in both years are unchanged from the vol. 19 Shows reviewed in the last *BL*, apart from Marion Cox's arrival in June 1946 to replace Joya Sherrill. The booklet listing omits to mention her, and it also claims that Otto Hardwick returned for the June shows. I don't recall seeing that suggestion anywhere else, ever, and I am sure Russell Procope plays here, even though he doesn't solo. Kay Davis and Al Hibbler are listed for 8<sup>th</sup> June though not for 1<sup>st</sup>. Like Marion they sing on both shows.

As ever it's the music that matters. This is our earliest issued *Flower Is A Lovesome Thing*, which Billy wrote in late 1939 for Johnny Hodges. An unissued 1941 aircheck exists, but no other recorded performance precedes this one. It was about to be studio recorded for Capitol Transcriptions, but LPs of these did not appear until 1978. And as Columbia's 1960 octet version was withheld until the 1979 *Unknown Session* LP, we see how scant our knowledge of the song used to be, and how valuable this genuine rarity still is. There's an obscure 1947 Hodges small-band recording, but I first encountered it in the mid-1960s version with Ella Fitzgerald. An abrupt cut in the announcement suggests this was probably not the Show's programmed opener.

Four Ellington classics are *Main Stem* (1942), *In A Jam* (1936 but revived in 1945), *Stomp, Look and Listen* (1944), and *Things Ain't What They Used To Be* (1941). Fuelled by Pettiford's forceful thrust, the band sounds great on all four, and comparisons with earlier performances are fascinating. On the earliest post-Stewart *Main Stem*, Hodges, Nanton and Brown survive from the 1942 soloists, and Hamilton and Sears take the roles of Barney Bigard and Ben Webster. *New DESOR* attributes the fiery trumpet solo to Taft Jordan; Graham Colombé's persuasive case for Cat Anderson is noted in Ken Steiner's comments. On *In A Jam* Tricky and Johnny remain from 1936, and Taft is Johnny's sparring partner, even though Cootie's original successor, Ray Nance, is now back in the band. In an uncharacteristic contribution Sears starts quietly, then becomes voluble, almost florid, with Sonny Greer echoing his rococo flourishes to great effect. Cat picks up the whole performance by the scruff of its neck to take it out in Rex's old role. A fizzing *Stomp, Look And Listen* has Duke, Jimmy and Lawrence as usual. In another of those trumpet identification issues which abound in mid-40s Ellingtonia, *New DESOR* identifies Ray Nance in the trade-of-fours with Taft, and Graham Colombé hears Cat. It's indisputably Cat again in Rex's original climactic slot.

*Things Ain't...*, the broadcast closer, is altogether more leisurely, though it kicks in with a vicious opening trumpet flourish. Interest here centres on Hodges' failure to enter as usual in the run-up to chorus 2. Duke summons him with a repeated-note figure which Pettiford echoes at the end of the chorus. When Johnny does arrive, we hear enough of him before the announcer breaks in to know he is, as ever, in great form.

The other tracks are songs. Al Hibbler's regular 1946 feature *I'm Just A Lucky So And So* has Hodges and Brown as usual fore and aft of the vocal. This is Kay Davis's earliest *Come Rain Or Come Shine*, the great Arlen-Mercer song which she would record again a few weeks later for Capitol Transcriptions. That version would feature Ray Nance's trumpet before the reprise; here Billy Strayhorn takes the episode at the piano. But the first singer to step up to the mike on 1 June was newcomer Marion Cox, to sing another very strong song, *A Ghost Of A Chance*. Like Kay she would record it for Capitol in July, but unlike Kay she would also cut it commercially, for Victor. Not that it did her any good; Victor sat on it until 1979 and the final volume of RCA-France's *Intégrale* series.

This is a short Treasury Show, but as you can see there is no shortage of interest. The following week's, from the unusual location of Reading PA, is much longer. It opens with the last full-length *Mood To Be Wooed*, soon to be dropped but here still programmed in the equivalent of motor racing's 'pole position'. Two other Ellington classics are the last *Johnny Come Lately* and *Mood Indigo* before Nanton's death. On the next full-band *Johnny*, in 1952, Quentin Jackson would take Tricky's solo. Here Duke sets it up with music which would coalesce in his *Clothèd Woman* in late 1947); we hear the initial descending figure, fleetingly, then the brisk central theme. On *Mood Indigo* Duke rhapsodizes at length, Carney's clarinet solo captures perfectly the mood's fragile essence, and Pettiford is masterly in the opening chorus.

Pettiford is masterly too in *Come Sunday* and *Light*, where the bass is crucial in bringing together the *Work Song* and spiritual themes. Taft Jordan plays the transition solo from *Come Sunday* into *Light*. The same *Black Brown And Beige* extracts from the August 1947 Hollywood Bowl concert, reissued not long ago on a Unique Jazz 10CD set, include the last surviving *Light* before Columbia re-recorded *Black* in 1958. The intervening years would yield only a few stand-alone excerpts, and nothing at all from *BB&B* survives from 1947 to 1955.

There are three popular songs: a unique performance of Irving Berlin's *They Say It's Wonderful* by Kay Davis, accompanied by Billy Strayhorn; a *Don't Take Your Love From Me* in which Al Hibbler comes in too early; and a very convincing *Lover Man* from Marion

Cox, sounding a bit like a much smokier and less motherly Jo Stafford. Victor would record it in August but sit on it until the late 1950s, which is a shame. Its strong links with Billie Holiday should not detract from Marion's version. Kay Davis would take it on in 1948-9 and Nell Brookshire would revive it in 1971. Ray Nance's novelty vocal *Riff Staccato*, heavily promoted during 1945, here has its last known airing.

Buck Clayton's *Blues on the Double* features fine solos from Hodges, Sears and Anderson in a supercharged performance which follows a lengthy set-up from Ellington. The forceful trumpet solo is of particular interest. Usually Taft Jordan is heard in Rex Stewart's old role, but the notes suggest Francis Williams is playing here, and I agree that the playing is not at all Taft-ish.

*Strange Love*, featuring the ever-dependable Carney, is a Strayhorn arrangement of a theme from a *film noir*, heard here in its only surviving performance. The minimally scored *Honeysuckle Rose* had been a feature for Jimmy Hamilton's clarinet since 1943. The helter-skelter *Riff'n'Drill*, an unusual closer which Duke had recorded earlier in the spring for Capitol Transcriptions, features Hodges, Brown and Anderson in a performance of great panache which comes to an abrupt end.

As on other recent issues in the DETS series, the two fillers are previously unissued airchecks from September 1943. With the exception of *Summertime*, a recently introduced feature for Duke's new ballad singer Al Hibbler, the 10 September one features strong Victor classics. The most recent is *Sentimental Lady*, which the band had recorded just before the Petrillo recording ban commenced in 1942, but which Victor had released much more recently, at the end of July 1943. *Jack The Bear* and *In A Mellotone* were recorded in 1940, and there is added interest here in hearing the band's newcomers in the place of departed soloists. We hear Hamilton and Nance for Bigard and Williams, and Raglin instead of Blanton. *Rockin' In Rhythm* is much older of course, but in a few weeks' time it would launch the 1943 World Transcriptions series in an electrifying reading.

The 7 September broadcast has *Johnny Come Lately*, recorded by Victor in 1942 but as yet unreleased, and *Don't Get Around Much Anymore*, the retitled *Never No Lament* (1940), and already a pop hit in 1943, though not for Ellington. Here it segues into the closing *Things Ain't.... Emancipation Celebration* from *Black, Brown and Beige* was soon to become one of the two short extracts from that monumental work to be presented at Duke's next Carnegie Hall concert. On *Go Away Blues* we hear Ivie Anderson's successor Betty Roché, who never recorded with Duke for Victor because of the Petrillo ban. Fortunately she did record this song in November for World.

These recordings show that in both years the band had lost none of its excellence in performance despite the loss of some key soloists. As usual the sound quality of the 1943 broadcasts is inferior to that on the 1946 Treasury Shows, but the music from both years is very fine. This strongly recommended Storyville release offers further evidence that the Ellington orchestra was emphatically not in decline in the mid-40s, but was holding its own strongly in a rapidly evolving musical climate.

Ken Steiner's exemplary notes include two background surveys which are invaluable in their own right. One develops a theme Ken has touched on before, the rise of radio in the USA and its part in furthering Duke's career. The other, an assessment of the Ellington Orchestra in 1946, considers Oscar Pettiford's early development, and his impact on the band and on the wider music scene.

I cannot run with Ken's speculation that we might look on *Black, Brown and Beige* as a 'work in progress'. The evidence of the surviving January 1943 concert recordings points to it being completed (hurriedly maybe, and with some last-minute changes) at the time of its first performances. The problem in getting to grips with *BB&B* is that for years we only had the 1944 Victor excerpts to guide us, and they are an imperfect and rather fragmentary guide, though beautifully recorded. Now we can supplement the Victors with the original concert recordings (most importantly); with substantial excerpts from the later 1940s such as the ones heard here; with the 1958 Columbia *Black*; and with Duke's later recordings, assembled onto one of the ten 1980s 'stockpile' CDs in what adds up to a new complete performance by the 1960s band. Duke never performed the work in its entirety after early 1943, but I am unaware of any changes, other than minor ones, to the 'text' as performed in New York and Boston on those momentous January nights long ago.

This remarkable series of CDs may seem to be one which is strictly for the specialists, but everyone who is serious about Ellington's music needs to be familiar with at least some of them, in order to appreciate what the Ellington Orchestra was up to in the mid-1940s. I have known music from some of the earlier Treasury Shows for many years, but the ones from late 1945 and 1946 are all new to me, and I am finding them very rewarding.

**Roger Boyes**

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EJC's *Billy Strayhorn – Day Dream* set (see *BL* 22/3, p22)

In my report on the contents of this recent 2CD compilation I speculated, concerning the third *Tonk* on CD2: 'I can't imagine which it may be, unless it's the one Duke and Billy played on the 25 August 1945

Treasury Show'. Our member Richard Pavé has emailed me to report that it is indeed that recording, and that the radio announcer is heard. The other two are, as I wrote in my report, the January 1946 Victor and the 1950 version for Mercer Records. Richard adds that the piano solos *Halfway To Dawn* (two versions) and *Tailspin*, hitherto not commercially available, are 'reproduced in excellent sound. So good that one could be standing six feet from the open grand piano'.

**RB**

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### The Columbia Studio Albums Collection, 1959-1961

Discographical information:  
Disc 1: *Jazz Party*, identical to Columbia CK-40712

Disc 2: *Anatomy of a Murder*, identical to Columbia CK-65569

Disc 3: *Festival Session*, identical to Columbia CK-87044

Disc 4: *Blues in Orbit*, identical to Columbia CK-44051

Disc 6: *Piano in the Background*, identical to Columbia CK-87107

Disc 9: *Piano in the Foreground*, identical to Columbia CK-87042

Disc 10: *Count Meets the Duke*, identical to Columbia CK-65571

For each of the above seven CDs, the CD is as previously issued.

Disc 8: *Unknown Session*, same titles and takes as Columbia 472084-2, but remastered. I prefer the sound to Columbia 472084-2, which has an echo throughout.

Disc 7: *Peer Gynt*, same titles and takes as Columbia 46825 tracks 10-18, but remastered. Slightly faster than Columbia 46825. *Solveig's Song* omits 20 seconds of Hamilton's clarinet solo, and *Zweet Zursday* fades out a few seconds earlier, relative to Columbia 46825.

Disc 5: *Nutcracker Suite*, same titles and takes as Columbia 46825 tracks 1-9 and Columbia 469139-2

tracks 1-10, but remastered. The sound quality is better than on Columbia 46825, but the first few seconds are missing on *The Volga Vouty*.

For all CDs, the liner notes are bare-bones and inferior to their earlier issues.

**Brian Koller**



## ECHOES OF ELLINGTON

THE APEX

BURY ST EDMUNDS

Sunday 24 January 2016, 1pm

This, my first opportunity for several years to hear *Echoes*, was a skilled and committed performance by gifted players well versed in the Ellington Orchestra's idiom. With the ebullient Pete Long directing proceedings and offering knowledgeably informative introductions, and Richard Pite, an excellent Ellington drummer, in the engine room, the presentation was entertaining and forceful. The band's line-up was similar to the one on their recent LP *The Tattooed Bride*, reviewed in *BL* 22/4, and their new one *You Oughta*, recorded on the same day. *Echoes* stalwarts Jay Craig, Colin Skinner, Chris Traves and Andy Flaxman were joined by such younger luminaries of the London jazz scene as George Hogg (trumpet), John Shenoy (reeds), and another fine reedsman, Duncan Hemstock from Adelaide, whose evident relish for this music was evident throughout the afternoon. It's easy to feel these days that all saxophonists grew up on a diet of John Coltrane. It's good to know some were apparently nourished by Lester Young and Ben Webster.

....The Apex programme promised 'The Duke's Greatest Hits', and essentially that's what we got, though there was more, for example the opener, *Echoes Of Harlem*, declaimed with fire and relish by Enrico Tomasso. By half-time we had heard *Perdido* in the 1950 extended version, with the *Hoppin' John* variant and the trombones soli chorus from the tour-of-the-orchestra sequence; Strayhorn's late '50s score of *Sophisticated Lady* with Jay Craig's baritone; *C Jam Blues*; and *Rockin' In Rhythm*. *Mood Indigo* had remarkable wa-wa trombone from Chris Traves, *It Don't Mean A Thing* boasted a great Nance-ish vocal from Enrico, and there were two *Sugar Plum* fairies, Jay Craig and Alex Garnett. At the interval the foyer was abuzz with appreciation.

The second set brought more deviations from the well-worn path implied by the show's title. It began with VIP's *Boogie/Jam With Sam*, and continued with a solo piano *Soda Fountain Rag* from Colin Good, a pianist I haven't heard before; his evident expertise in early jazz piano styles make him very much at home in this music. A fiery *Cotton Tail* and a low-down *Mooche* followed. While *Prelude To A Kiss* and *Things Ain't What They Used To Be* are certainly Ellington hits, *Flying Home*, in Dick Vance's 1950s arrangement, would scarcely be considered in that category. With *In A Mellotone* and *Solitude* we were on familiar enough ground for the run-in to the finale, but the closing *Satin Doll* was a greatest hit and an obscure by-way at the same time, since the version *Echoes* played was the Wild Bill Davis one from the late 60s, as heard on the *70<sup>th</sup> Birthday Concert* LP.

1pm on Sunday is an odd time for this sort of performance and I'm pleased to report that the Apex was well filled; also that not everyone present was a grizzled ancient reliving memories of seeing the Ellington Orchestra in the 1960s. Enthusiastic applause brought no encore at 3.30. As Pete explained, the band had to travel to the Sussex coast for an evening show. I hope the Dartford Crossing was kind to them and they arrived on time.

Roger Boyes

### Lush Life: The Songs of Billy Strayhorn

We were pleased to see rave reviews for pianist/arranger Alex Webb's celebration of the life and work of Billy Strayhorn. DESUK member Frank Griffith wrote about the presentation in *BL* 22/3 and led his Festival Tentet during the performance.

Noted critic Peter Vacher, for example, said:

"...there was considerable solo firepower in this ensemble, not least from Griffith himself, always persuasive on tenor, and the fiercely inventive altoist Tony Kofi, who later told me how much he'd enjoyed playing Robbie Robson's arrangement of the immortal *Blood Count*. Still, for all that this was conceived as a singer's show.

"First up was Harlem-ite Allan Harris, an engaging vocalist who has something of Nat King Cole's ease with a song, this evident as he bounced on stage for *Jump for Joy*, the band sound reminding me of the Savoy Sultans of yesteryear. He stayed for two more pieces to be replaced by the overly histrionic David McAlmont, essentially a soul-oriented pop singer who deployed his falsetto on *My Little Brown Book*, this sparked by a thoughtful Adrian Fry trombone solo. It was Fry's arrangement of 'Rain Check' [with lyrics by Webb] that brought on the hyper-active Sandra Nkaké, strutting and staying just this side of vocal mayhem on *Rhumbop*, before she combined with McAlmont on the evergreen *Satin Doll* and so it went, each singer taking turn and turnabout. With Omar Puente supreme on violin on *A Train*, the vocal trio then turned the climactic *C-Jam Blues* into a madcap romp as *Duke's Place* using the Armstrong-inspired lyrics that emerged on the iconic encounter between Duke and Satchmo, as each band member soloed, pianist Peter Edwards, bandleader Griffith, Kofi and trumpeter Sue Richardson seizing their moments splendidly. Great stuff."



# Suites to the Sweet by Ian Bradley

**RNCM BIG BAND**

**Directed by Mike Hall**

**Royal Northern College of Music**

**Manchester**

**Saturday 31 October 2015**

There can be no more important a way of bringing the music of Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn to new – and young – audiences than performing it live. And when that live performance is curated as intelligently and performed as fastidiously as it was by the RNCM Big Band last Autumn, it is bound to win many converts to the cause.

The evening's performance was entitled *Take The 'A' Train* in honour of Billy Strayhorn whose centenary, of course, fell last autumn. As if to prove the point that Billy's work had a life beyond the Ellington band book – though that was to prove the main fare of the evening – two versions of the tune were performed, the 'original' and Don Sebesky's own arrangement for big band.

Master of ceremonies for the evening and 'leader of the band' was Mike Hall, Royal Northern College of Music's Head of Jazz Studies. He wore his learning lightly in introducing the pieces to the Orchestra and whilst the evening was ostensibly billed as a Strayhorn celebration, his informed commentary did not become an 'A' Train-spotter's guide, if you will: as the orchestra's director pointed out, the provenance of many of these pieces in the sense of who-wrote-what is not always cut and dried. This evening was a time simply to enjoy the total effect of the music. Like the 'who-actually-wrote-Shakespeare' conundrum, it is an arid question: the playing's the thing!

Mike Hall is, of course, no mean reed player himself. In the weeks prior to this concert, I had the pleasure of hearing him perform in that capacity as a member of Pete Long's Echoes of Ellington orchestra. Consciously or not, the programme Mike had put together for the RNCM Big Band complemented Pete's rather more raucous selections perfectly: this was the rather more tender, reflective side of the Ellington/ Strayhorn oeuvre. We were treated, therefore, to generous helpings from the *Nutcracker Suite*, *Such Sweet Thunder*, the *Peer Gynt Suite* (a particular favourite of mine) and *The Far East Suite*. Whilst I devour voraciously every note of every era of Ellington's work, I must confess to a particular partiality to the post-Newport years and, in particular, that golden decade well into the sixties from which these pieces were drawn. The concert, then, was a delight.

The Orchestra was superb. The rhythm section, for example, of Jennifer Pearson and Joshua Savage on drums, Alastair McMath on bass, James Girling on guitar and Lydia Lallement on piano rendered the gossamer web of the rhythm finely to every last tintinnabulation.

In their extemporized soli – the acid test for any aspiring jazz musician – there was no slavish copying of the originals, no bold planting in the footsteps of another, like a Wenceslas page boy; rather these young students bore their solo responsibilities well, riding the changes adroitly and essaying improvisations which showed a clear understanding of the 'mainstream' tradition.

Special mention must be made of the reed section and Catherine Hanson on baritone saxophone in particular whose efforts notably on *Agra* more than summoned the shade of Harry Carney.

An outstanding vocal performance was given by Isabelle Peters. Her reading of *A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing* was exquisite, showing that rarest of blooms: a classically-trained singer whose voice can fit the vernacular of popular song like a velvet glove.



*'Over the past 20 years I have seen jazz at the RNCM move from 'something music students do in the evening for fun' to become a rich source of learning and performance opportunity. The RNCM Big Band is the flagship ensemble which has supported and represented this transformation. Each concert is usually enhanced by working with guest artists from the very top of the profession. Our students get a huge buzz from playing these shows and the stylistic and technical challenges help to equip them for the demands of the commercial music world.'*

**Mike Hall,  
RNCM Big Band Director**

# Events compiled by Roger Boyes

## DESUK AGM

**Sat 30 Apr, 1:00pm**

Annual general meeting followed by record recital.  
Civil Service Club, 13-15 Great Scotland Yard,  
London SW1A 2HJ Tel: SW1A 2HJ

## Royal College of Music

**Sat 30 April, 9.45 pm:** The RCM big band directed by Mark Armstrong plays *Such Sweet Thunder* in the Clore Ballroom of the Festival Hall, South Bank Centre, Belvedere Road London SE1 8XX.  
Transcribed by Michael Kilpatrick

## Ellington '16

**19-22 May, New York City**

See page 5 for details.

## Matt Cooper

**Fri 17 Jun 6.30pm:** Ellington/ Strayhorn piano recital, Foyles auditorium, Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0DT

## DESUK London Group

(For contact details, see page 2)

**18 Jun 2:00-5:00pm** Geoff Smith: *Beginning To See The Light* (new from the stockpile)

**13 Aug 2:00-5:00pm** Roger Boyes: *Trees and Leaves*

## Echoes of Ellington

**Fri 17 Jun 8.00pm:** The Stables, Stockwell Lane, Wavendon, Milton Keynes MK17 8LU. £21. Box Office: 01908 280800. Email: stables@stables.org

## Exeter Jazz and Blues Club

Meets monthly, first Tuesdays; White Ensign Club, Southampton St, Exeter, 7 for 7.30pm.

**Tue 5 July:** Geoff Smith: *Cent-Ellington* - Andrew Homzy's Montreal concert w augmented European Broadcasting Union Orchestra.

## Bratislava Hot Serenaders July 2016 UK tour:

**Sat 16 Jul** Marlborough Jazz Festival; **Sun 17**

Swansea, Taliesin Arts Centre; **Mon 18** Apex, Bury St Edmunds;

**Tue 19-Th 21** Edinburgh Jazz Festival; **Fri 22** Malton N Yorks., Milton Rooms; **Sat 23** Petworth Festival Sussex.

'Early Ellington unsurpassed!' comments our member Roger Offord.

**Frank Griffith**

**Th 7 Apr, 8pm.** w Tina May and Hugh Ockendon Trio. Eltham Warren Golf Club, Bexley Road, Eltham, SE9 2PE. £8. 0208 850 4477

**Tue 5 July, 8pm.** FG Nonet w Tina May. Annie's Jazz Club. Thorpe Hall Golf Club. Thorpe Hall, Essex, SS1 3AT. £12. [www.anniesjazzclub.vpweb.co.uk](http://www.anniesjazzclub.vpweb.co.uk)

## TDES (NY)

Meets Thursdays 8pm at St Peter's Church 54<sup>th</sup> St & Lexington Avenue

21 April, 19 May, 16 June

And finally...

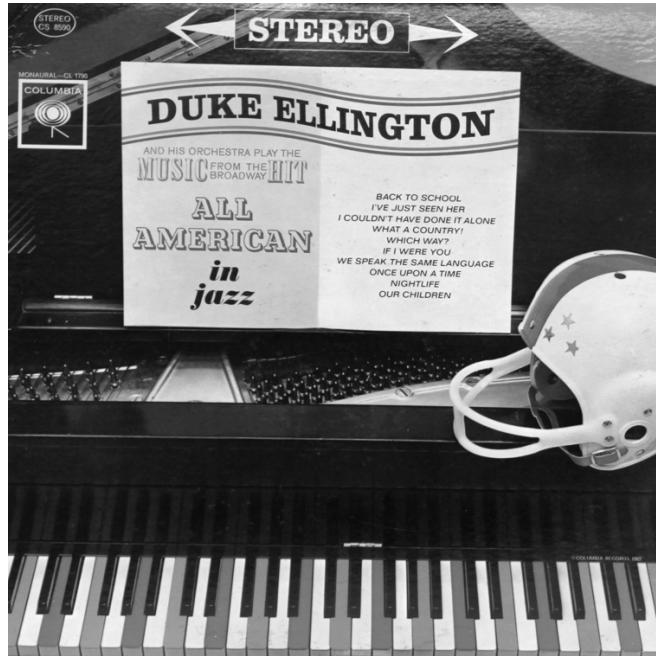
## Sheffield Jazz Society

(For contact details, see page 2)

**Mon 4 Apr** Roger Boyes on Lester Young in the 1950s (shameless plug by the compiler of this Calendar, since this is *not* an Ellington-themed event)

## Sat 23 April, 7:30pm:

GSMD-DESUK annual project concert  
Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Silk Street,  
EC2Y 8DT. Free admission



The Guildhall Jazz Band directed by Martin Hathaway plays *All American in Jazz* in Michael Kilpatrick's edition.

Entries for the next issue, *BL 23/2*, must reach me by Friday 20 May **RB**

# Gonsalves on the *Unknown Session* by Roger Boyes

Did Paul Gonsalves play on the 22 July 1960 *Unknown Session* small group recordings? The question has cropped up once again with their recent reissue on the *Columbia Studio Albums Collection 1959-61* set. When I raised it in 2011 in my review of the EJC 55504 *Bal Masqué* CD (BL 18/2 p2), I unfortunately failed to recall a 1999 discussion, summarized in *DEMS Bulletin 99/5* (p6) and readily accessible on-line, which seems to clinch it. Despite the fact that there are no Gonsalves solos and that he isn't mentioned on track listings on the various issues or in Dance's original sleeve notes, it seems clear he was present in the ensemble.

Here's how the 1999 discussion went. Louis Tavecchio initiated it by pointing out the discrepancy between Timner (4<sup>th</sup> edn.) who states that Paul took part, and Nielsen who like Dance says there are four horns, Nance, Brown, Hodges and Carney. Louis also asked the late Annie Kuebler if she knew who arranged the music.

Michael Kilpatrick sided with Timner: 'Paul Gonsalves IS on it! You can hear clearly in many cases that there are four background horns behind the solos, and there is one track (I forget which) where you hear Gonsalves taking the theme in the upper register'.

Louis was relieved: 'I knew my ears didn't deceive me! I have been listening to several tracks time and again. I could not imagine that the "tenor sound" I thought to hear was produced by Hodges or Carney (or by some kind of blend of their horns). He also quotes Kurt Dietrich; 'On some of the arrangements there is another (unknown) horn player, playing parts but not soloing' (*Duke's Bones* p159 n9).

Annie's response also supported Michael and Louis: 'Your ears do not deceive you; it is indeed Paul Gonsalves on tenor. Maybe he was the "unknown" factor. In the extant scores a tenor part is present which alone doesn't mean anything, but I think we can assume it is Gonsalves. I find it very interesting that tenor/Paul is scored to play in unison or in accompaniment with another instrument throughout. The tenor is identified as "Paul" on several scores by both Ellington and Strayhorn. As for Gonsalves not soloing, I see the album as a celebration of Lawrence Brown's return to the fold and his reuniting with Johnny Hodges'.

Turning to the arrangements, Annie added: '*Everything But You*, *Black Beauty*, *All Too Soon*, *Creole Blues* and *Don't You Know I Care?* were

Ellington arrangements and *Something To Live For*, *Mood Indigo*, *A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing* and (as memory serves) *Tonight I Shall Sleep* were Strayhorn's. I'm not sure about *Dual Highway* or *Mighty Like The Blues* or *Blues*'.

Sjef Hoefsmit, who had earlier agreed with Dance and Nielsen that Paul did not participate, wrote: 'I found in the ledgers of the American Federation of Musicians a document that proves that Paul Gonsalves was paid for taking part in the 14 July 1960 session'. Pointing out that one should be heard in the recording in order to be referred to in the discographies, he asked where Paul can be heard on the CD, track and time.

Louis Tavecchio himself supplied the most comprehensive and specific reply, after listening for several hours to the *Unknown Session* CD with a tenor player, Ad Oud.

*Everything But You*, from 2:10 and between 2:25-2:58,

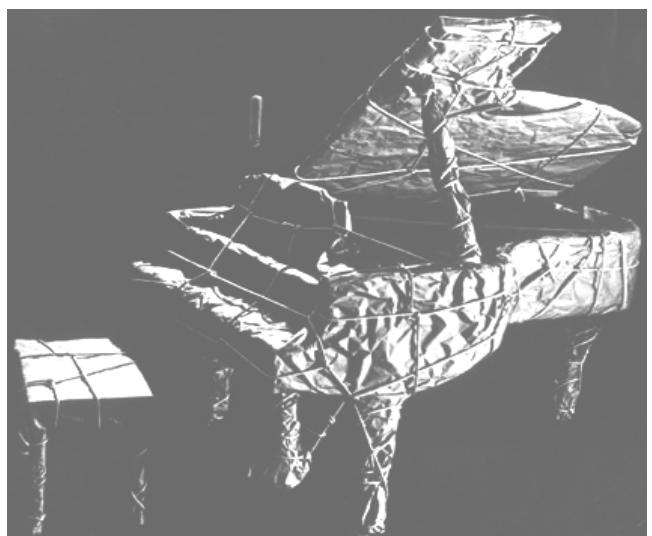
*Black Beauty*, from 1:12 and between 1:29 and 1:42, *Mood Indigo*, between 2:32 and 3:20,

*Don't You Know I Care?* between 1:20 and 2:51, *A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing*, from 1:22 until Harry Carney's solo

*Mighty Like The Blues*, start until Carney's short solo, then from 0:37 until Duke's solo

*Dual Highway*. From 0:32 until 1:02, then from 2:02 until 2:48.

Others added *Tonight I Shall Sleep* to the list. Sjef and Luciano were convinced, and so am I.



## MINUTES OF DESUK COMMITTEE TELECONFERENCE

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> Nov 2015 @ 1830 GMT

- 1) **CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS:** Chairman Geoff Smith (GS) opened the Teleconference firstly with a Roll Call of the committee members present on the phone.  
**Treasurer Grant Elliot (GE); Membership Secretary Mike Coates (MC); Meetings Organiser Antony Pepper (AP); Roger Boyes (RB); Committee members Ian Bradley (IB) and George Duncan (GD) (in the absence of Secretary Quentin Bryar (QB) agreed to record the minutes)**  
(GS) mentioned that the Teleconference was unusual but that business should proceed as much as possible as if we were all in person. All present agreed and also that the minutes of the last meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> July 2015 would not be approved until the next full meeting planned for 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2016.  
GS Did wish to record that at his attendance at the 23<sup>rd</sup> International Duke Ellington Conference in Portland, Oregon, he was delighted to note the high esteem that the DESUK was held in and that ours was the only Logo included on the Reed college program.
- 4) GS then asked if there were any matters arising that required early discussion.
  - 4a) Regarding the Matt Cooper visit failure GS reported that although disappointed, Matt Cooper is now hoping to visit the UK in June while accompanying conference in Cheltenham and hopes that perhaps during that visit a performance might be arranged.
  - 4b) Regarding the new leaflet, a short discussion led by MC on the content and inclusion on the website with AP was heard and will be discussed further, with this matter being added to the next meeting agenda. MC to bring draft leaflet to the next meeting.
- 5) **OFFICERS REPORTS:**
  - a) Treasurer GE with AP had a short discussion regarding contributions, PayPal etc, with the new address tested and up and running.
  - b) Blue Light editor (written report circulated by IB)
  - c) Vice Chairman – not present
  - d) Publicity (CA not present)
  - e) Membership MC reported that the current year membership shows a net loss but made up by new members including some via the Portland conference. Full report follows at the Jan meeting including details of members' payments and significant donations. *Blue Light* binders – 19 available with 9 spoken for next BL to contain an advert regards this.
  - f) Meetings Organiser/website AP no changes meanwhile re website, but would welcome input for a new look.
- 6) **AGM and Guildhall Band/RCM concerts (AP/GE)** AP is awaiting confirmation of proposed concerts for the week previous to the AGM after discussions with new musical director at the Guildhall school of music Malcolm Edmiston. RB will include date of the AGM as an insert in BL 22/4.
- 7) **Email news updates (GS, David Marks)** GS suggested full discussion at next meeting.
- 8) **Life Membership (Chairman, Treasurer, Roger Boyes et al)** in conjunction with item 9.
- 9) **New Members who joined towards end of calendar year (MC, GE, RB et al)** full discussion re this matter, also wording on website AP. This may well be resolved after email exchanges with final decision re free BL's to new members left to RB.
- 10) **Date/venue of next meeting (GS, AP)** Punch Tavern January 23<sup>rd</sup> with AP clarifying times: 12.30 for 1pm start.
- 11) **Standing agenda items a) Future of society b) recommendation on constitutional change.** To be added to Agenda for Jan 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.
- 12) **AOCB** There being none GS thanked all present for taking part and declared meeting closed at 19.30 GMT.

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN

As with Ellington himself our Society has many aspects, not all of them obvious even to the most committed and proudest of members. *Blue Light*, now our Journal rather than newsletter, is a shining beacon and rightly tends to be the first thing we think of. But what else is going on in DESUK and how can you play a part, should that be your wish?

For instance, do you have good-condition examples of the Panther Room, Hotel Sherman, Chicago, broadcasts of September and October 1940? The Committee has it in mind to "do something" with them and the priority is to put them into a digital format, hopefully cleaning up or otherwise enhancing the sound which is poor-to-middling on the pair of bootleg LPs issued several decades ago. Please let me know if you can help. As Eddie Lambert notes in his *Listener's Guide*, only the sound quality prevented their being listed in the outstanding records of what was a notable period for Duke and the Orchestra. Lambert proclaimed: "Musically, all are superb". As I see it, having them available again hopefully in better sound would be an excellent service to members. Do email or phone me also if you have suggestions on other important rare recordings which should be back in circulation.

What about the live Ellington music of today? Here again the Society continues to be active, or tries its best to be. I can offer you the life-enhancing chance of becoming a presenter of live Ellington in the form of arranging a recital by renowned pianist and DESUK member Matt Cooper. It really is quite simple. Matt is in the UK in June and we have arranged for him to play at Foyles auditorium, London, on Friday 17 June. It should not stop there; Matt can come to you in the days before and after and play the best Duke piano you can experience this side of Heaven for you and your local music fans, whether or not in an established club. All that is required is a suitable venue, even the proverbial back room of a welcoming pub, and, of course, a decent piano. Committee members are urgently exploring possibilities around the country and would greatly appreciate your involvement if only with suggestions. Again, do make contact with a committee member or me.

Anything else? How about us producing some artwork exclusively for members? It's just a possibility at this stage. Our AGM is approaching and I can promise you there will be news of other exciting DESUK activities then. Assiduous reading of committee meeting minutes in this and recent issues will give you a clue or two. Meanwhile, enjoy reading your *Blue Light*, reflecting as it does the always enjoyable, important, and stimulating world of Duke – and of our Society.

**Geoff Smith**

