



BLUE LIGHT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DUKE ELLINGTON SOCIETY UK
VOLUME 21 NUMBER 3 AUTUMN 2014



NIL SIGNIFICAT NISI PULSATUR



DUKE ELLINGTON SOCIETY UK

<http://dukeellington.org.uk>

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Buster Cooper
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Harold Ashby (13 June 2003)
Jimmy Woode (23 April 2005)
Humphrey Lyttelton (25 April 2008)
Louie Bellson (14 February 2009)
Joya Sherrill (28 June 2010)
Alice Babs (11 February, 2014)
Herb Jeffries (25 May 2014)
Derek Else (16 July 2014)

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

Payment may be made by:

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

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

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

Overseas members may send a Sterling International Money Order.

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

- Victor Lawrance, Treasurer

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SOCIETY NOTICES

DESUK London Social Meetings:

Civil Service Club, 13-15 Great Scotland Yard, London SW1; off Whitehall, Trafalgar Square end. 2nd Saturdays of the month, 2pm.
Tel.: 01342 314053; email: ap@antonypepper.com

Manchester Jazz Society:

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

Sheffield Jazz Society:

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

TDES (New York):

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

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

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Editorial

Amongst the greatest pleasures in preparing copy for *Blue Light* is the opportunity to correspond with Ellington experts and aficionados not just in the UK but the world over. So, in preparing this edition, I have enjoyed the exchange of emails with David Palmquist, whose exhaustive survey of Ellington's travels *The Duke Where And When* published on line recently is our lead news item this issue, Mona Granager of Storyville Records and Dr Edward Green of The Manhattan School of Music amongst other distinguished correspondents.

It is love of the music of Duke Ellington which remains a common bond between us as it would have been for friends and colleagues of Derek Else, a former editor of *Blue Light* amongst many other posts of responsibility he held within the Society. Derek passed away in July. It is a measure of the debt the Society owes him, that when he retired from the committee, he was elected unanimously an Honorary Member of DESUK, one of only two, along with Humphrey Lyttleton, who was not a former alumnus of the Duke Ellington Orchestra.

I never met Derek and did not know him personally. I understand some of the pleasure of his friendship and acquaintance, however, from Gerald Elvin's thoughts, expressed following the news of Derek's death. Gerald writes:

"Derek was a mentor to me when I joined his little quartet, way back in the 2000s as a rather inadequate, but enthusiastic bass player, with a fondness for the music of The Duke which went back to my teenage years. I have recently been playing the recordings we made in the Valentines Mansion, as I have been doing household tasks, and think fondly of that awkward and sometimes, abrasive clarinettist in his back room amid all the clutter on Thursday afternoons as we rehearsed pieces together. Even to this day, I regret the "folding-up" of the band in 2009 when Derek realised that his lip and fingers were not behaving as he wanted them to in his playing, and brought 'Who Else For Jazz' to a close.

"Best wishes, and some sorrow, for the passing of a great instrumentalist, arranger and bandleader."

Derek Else was involved with DESUK from its creation. The twentieth anniversary of the Society's inception falls in December.

Celebrating the anniversary next issue will add poignancy to our celebration of all Derek contributed to the Society then and throughout the years.

Ian Bradley

The Duke – Where and When

A Chronicle of Duke Ellington's Working Life and Travels



The Duke – Where and When: A Chronicle of Duke Ellington's Working Life and Travels web page is now online at <http://tdwaw.ca>. The webpage is meant to be a reference tool for Ellington researchers and biographers, but it will interest anyone who shares my fascination with the amazing amount of travel done by Duke Ellington and his Orchestra throughout his adult life, or who simply wants to check certain facts - there's a lot of misinformation in biographies and on the internet.

Putting the itinerary online so researchers can share their knowledge and avoid duplicating their efforts was Carl Hällström's idea. Carl persuaded Klaus Götting to let me use his August 2011 print-layout itinerary *The Duke: Where and When* as a starting point, and Carl nominated various researchers to participate, including Ken Steiner, our most active team member.

Klaus allowed me to use his title for the webpage, and the URL (webpage address) is simply an acronym for The Duke - Where And When. The domain .ca was chosen because I'm Canadian(eh?).

This "evergreen" project began in 2011 and has been my primary hobby since Ellington 2012. It will never

be complete and despite best efforts, will have mistakes and omissions. New information, additional references, corrections and simple reporting of glitches are welcome.

While I did the html coding and lots of my own research, this is a team effort. Our chronicle expands upon Klaus' itinerary which in turn was built on and expanded the earlier itineraries created and/or published by the late Joe Igo, the late Gordon Ewing the late Art Pilkington (see DEMS 08/2-6), the late Frank Dutton, the late Dr. Klaus Stratemann, the late Ken Vail, Steven Lasker, and Ken Steiner. Klaus gathered material from a great many other sources, as well as direct and indirect contributions from Roger Boyes (UK), Jan Bruér (Sweden), the late Jack Chambers (USA), Graham Colombé (UK), Georges Debroe (Belgium), Agustín Pérez Gasco (Spain), Michael Graff (USA), the late Sjef Hoefsmit (Belgium), Ted Hudson (USA), Carl A. Hällström (Sweden), Steven Lasker (USA), Michel MacAire (France), Luciano Massagli (Italy), Joe Mosbrook (USA), Jordi Navis-Ferrer (Spain), Wolfram Knauer (Germany), Arne Neegaard (Norway), Jean Portier (France), Ben Pubols (USA), Ulf Renberg, R

Schneider, Rick Steiger (USA), William E. Timner (Canada), Lance Travis (South Africa), the late Jerry Valburn (USA), and Giovanni M. Volonté (Italy), and of course, all the contributors to the DEMS Bulletins. A great deal of credit is due to the late Sjef Hoefsmit and his predecessor, the late Benny H. Aasland of The International Duke Ellington Music Society for their dedication to collecting and sharing the tremendous body of Ellington knowledge they published three times a year (latterly three) in the DEMS Bulletin for thirty-three years.

I haven't finished adding the many hundreds of events and corrections discovered by Steven Lasker and Ken Steiner, but I am very grateful to them for their outstanding support, clarifications, and encouragement. As of May 2014 the team included, in addition to those named above, Bjorn Andresen (Israel), Ian Bradley (UK), Nicholas Fernandez (USA), Marcus Girvan (Scotland), Michael Graff (USA), and Andrew Homzy (Canada), and of course Donna (Monika) Stratemann of Germany, who kindly gave me her late husband's research files, and both Patricia Willard (USA) and Roger Boyes (UK) who have provided so much encouragement and help by clarifying facts and providing valuable context.

I am particularly grateful to Klaus Götting and to Marcus Girvan, because they allowed me to copy blatantly from their electronic documents, which has saved me hundreds of hours of typing. There are many others who have provided a great deal of help. If I've failed to acknowledge you, it may be because your messages are sitting on my defunct old computer or just because I forgot. If you contributed information used by Mr. Götting or by me and your name has not been mentioned, please accept my apology and let me know so I can credit you on the acknowledgements page.

The hyperlink <http://tdwaw.ca> takes you to an index page where you will pause for 30 seconds to allow time to consider opening one of the hyperlinks shown on the index page. After 30 seconds, your browser will be redirected to the itinerary. If you don't want to wait 30 seconds, there's a link to jump right away.

The itinerary is an html document that uses css. If you find an extremely wide right margin in places, or some unexpected text above a year, please let me know. Those are easy-to-fix coding mistakes.

Each browser reads html code differently and various screen formats affect the display, you may see borders and fonts that are a little cruder than I intended. Nevertheless, the page works well in Windows-compatible browsers Opera, Internet Explorer 9 and 11, Firefox, and Safari which are freeware and easy to install. I did not test Chrome or earlier versions of IE, nor did I try to open the file on a Mac computer. I believe it works on tablets, but it

may be slow and it's probably too big for smart phones.

We have 14,000 or so events listed and an additional 3,600 dates marked as undocumented, so the file is over 8 megabytes in size. If you have a slow Internet connection or you pay by the minute for data usage, this webpage may not be for you.

The itinerary uses tables with ten columns: Start date; End date for multi-day events; City and jurisdiction; Venue; Event description and related information; Primary information sources; New Desor references; DEMS references; Other information (mostly things I haven't checked out); and the date the entry was made or updated. I'm still adding weekdays to the first column, names of states or countries, and expanding multiday events to cover each day. It's taken a lot longer than I expected because filling in these details often requires research, which takes me down new and interesting garden paths. This is my hobby, not my job, so I don't have a deadline to meet.

Navigation is easy with {up} and {down} arrows and {page up}/{page down} buttons. It's fast to go to the Year navigation bar at the top (get there with your {Home} key), click your target year and scroll up or down from there. A touchpad on a laptop may not be very useful for a file this size, and I don't know how it will work with touchscreens.

I usually use the browser's "Find" tool ({Control-F} with Windows browsers) to find particular search strings - the name of a venue, a city, a song title, etc. Searching for a date requires you to use the **yyyy mm dd** format with spaces. For instance, May 13, 1951 should be keyed as **1951 05 13** (that is, 1951[space] 05[space] 13). You can also look for changes since your last visit by searching for recent updates. For instance, 2014-08 will find entries posted or updated in August 2014.

Most browsers will open a cached copy of the webpage until you refresh it. Windows-based browsers refresh webpages if you press {F5}.

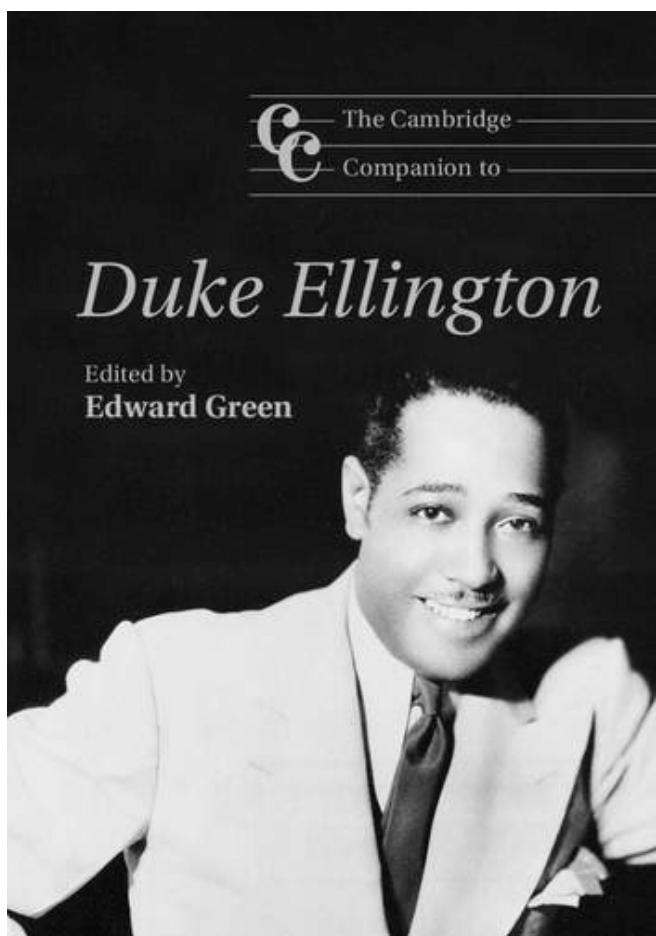
I encourage you to participate in our project. Whether you do or not, though, please enjoy the webpage and let me know if you spot mistakes or glitches.

David Palmquist davidpalmquist@telus.net



Diesel locomotive brings the Southern Railway's "Tennessean" passenger train into Harrisonburg, Virginia, 1947.

New critical study of Ellington's music to be published.



The Cambridge Companion to Duke Ellington is to be published in the UK on 30 November 2014.

The anthology of critical essays is edited by Edward Green, a professor at Manhattan School of Music, where since 1984 he has taught jazz, music history, composition, and ethnomusicology. He is also on the faculty of the Aesthetic Realism Foundation, and studied with the renowned philosopher Eli Siegel, the founder of Aesthetic Realism. Dr. Green serves on the editorial boards of *The International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, Haydn (the journal of the Haydn Society of North America), *Проблемы Музыкальной Науки* (Music Scholarship), which is published by a consortium of major Russian conservatories, and is editor of *China and the West: The Birth of a New Music* (2009). An active composer, he received a 2009 Grammy nomination for his *Piano Concertino* (Best Contemporary Classical Composition) and a commission offered jointly by thirteen of America's major concert wind ensembles, which resulted in his 2012 *Symphony for Band*.

Dr Green told DESUK: "Evan Spring is my associate editor. The book has a very distinguished list of authors: scholars, critics, and jazz musicians of note.

"To avoid favouritism, let me just go in order. First, Evan has provided a truly superb chronology of Ellington's life and career. In my Editor's Introduction I aim to place Ellington's meaning in music history - and to do so with philosophical perspective.

"The book, proper, then follows, and it is organized in three large units. The first presents Ellington 'in context' and is the most biographical unit. Here we have chapters by John Howland, Stephen James, Dave Berger, Brian Priestley, Walter van der Leur, and Olly Wilson (this last, in collaboration with Emmett Price.). Among the topics are the musical background of Ellington's formative years, Ellington's relation over the decades to the musicians in his band, his partnership with Strayhorn, and his various trips abroad.

"The second section is a mini history of his career with an emphasis on him as composer. It goes by decades: Jeffrey Magree writing about the 20's through to Dan Morgenstern writing about the 60s and 70s. The other contributors in chronological order are Andrew Berish (the 30s), Anna Celenza (the 40s), and Anthony Brown (the 50s).

"The final unit is the most technical and deals with Ellington and various aspects of the jazz tradition. The authors here are Ben Givan, Bill Dobbins, Marcello Piras, Will Friedwald, Dave Berger, and Ben Bierman. Among the chapter topics are Ellington as songwriter, Ellington and the jazz piano, Ellington and extended form, and Ellington and the blues.

"No book with multiple authorship has ever appeared with such an ambitious overview of Ellington. The last was back in 1958 - *Duke Ellington: His Life and Music*, edited by Peter Gammond."

Ian Bradley

Oxford University Press publishes special Ellington edition of *The Musical Quarterly*.

Duke Ellington's music is certainly being talked about in academic circles at present. Just as news of *The Cambridge Companion* was emerging, Oxford University Press devoted an entire issue of *The Musical Quarterly* to Ellington's work.

Volume 96 Issue 3-4 Fall-Winter 2013 contains eight essays about Ellington's music by major musicologists and academic writers. The contents comprise:

John Howland *Ellingtonia, Historically Speaking Leisure, Love, and Dreams in Depression America: Duke Ellington and Tin Pan Alley Song*

Aaron J. Johnson *A Date with the Duke: Ellington on Radio*

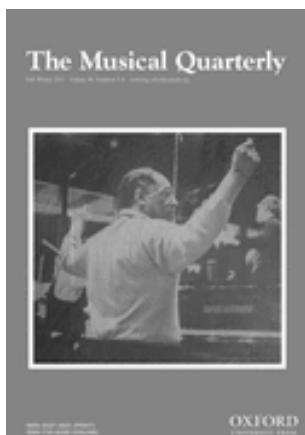
Harvey G. Cohen *Duke Ellington on Film in the 1930*

Lisa Barg and Walter van de Lier "Your Music Has Flung the Story of 'Hot Harlem' to the Four Corners of the Earth!" *Race and Narrative in Black, Brown and Beige*

David Schiff *Symphonic Ellington? Rehearing New World A-Comin'*

Olle Edström *Ellington in Sweden*

Travis A. Jackson *Tourist Point of View? Musics of the World and Ellington's Suites*



All the essays may be downloaded from *The Musical Quarterly* website:

<http://mq.oxfordjournals.org/content/96/3-4.toc>
IB

Duke Ellington with Percy Faith and his Orchestra: a newly discovered recording.

The predominantly classical CD *The Golden Age of Light Music: The Lost Transcriptions - Volume 2* (Guild CD GLCD 5181) issued in 2011, would normally be outside the sphere of interest for the Ellington collector. Nine, nine, and seven tracks, respectively are contributed by the Percy Faith, Mantovani, and Sidney Torch orchestras.



However, track 7 is the *Stalking Monster* movement of the Duke Ellington composition *Night Creature* and features Duke himself on piano.

In fact, Duke is the solo performer for both the first and last minute of the 3:48 title. No one else from the

Ellington Orchestra is present. The date and location of the recording is unknown, but may have been in 1955, since the debut of *Night Creature* was the Ellington Orchestra's 16 March 1955 performance with The Symphony of The Air at Carnegie Hall, New York. The best-known version of *Stalking Monster* is from *The Symphonic Ellington Reprise* LP recorded 8 February 1963.

All recordings on the Guild CD are from 1947 to circa-1955 transcription records intended for American or British Armed Forces Radio Networks. Apart from *Night Creature*, the only other title likely of interest to jazz aficionados is track 8, *Deep Blues*, which features the formidable clarinet of Vincent J. Abato, a former member of the Tommy Dorsey and Glenn Miller Orchestras.

Brian Koller

Ellington 2016

Following the success of The International Duke Ellington Conference 2014 in Amsterdam, a proposal for *Ellington 2016: 23rd International Duke Ellington Study Group Conference- Duke Ellington's New York* has been put forward by The Duke Ellington Centre for the Arts, New York.

President, Founder and Artistic Director of the Centre, Mercedes Ellington, was Guest of Honour in Amsterdam. It is the aim, in part, for the New York assembly to continue the Study Groups. The proposal says:

"Ellington 16 is intended to continue the tradition and to work towards making sure these conferences will be held far into the future. The main purpose of Ellington16 is to ensure a platform for the continuation of the Ellington Study Group scholars."

Further to this aim, the proposal also states that Ellington 16 must 'strive to broaden the conference to include younger scholars, educate and include students... and generally raise awareness of... Duke Ellington.'

It is hoped that plans for the conference will proceed in partnership with, amongst others, Jazz at Lincoln Centre, The National Jazz Museum in Harlem, Columbia University, The Juilliard School, The Manhattan School of Music, The Smithsonian Institution and The Duke Ellington Society of New York.

Marilyn Lester, Executive Director of The Duke Ellington Centre for the Arts, is in close contact with DESUK. We hope to bring news in due course of the continuing development of this exciting and ambitious project. IB

Herb Jeffries - Obituary

Herb Jeffries was a singer who rode the silver screen as the 'Bronze Buckaroo' and delivered a rich baritone for Duke Ellington.



Herb Jeffries, who has died aged 100, was an actor and musician who made his name in the 1930s as "The Bronze Buckaroo", the western genre's first black singing cowboy star; he later went on to play with Duke Ellington's band on their 1941 hit *Flamingo*.

A self-confessed western buff who had grown up watching the silent escapades of Tom Mix and Jack Holt, in the 1930s Jeffries set out to produce a low-budget western with an all-black cast. Though the silent era had seen a number of films starring only black actors, they had all but disappeared with the economic downturn and the arrival of the talkies, which proved too expensive for many of the "white independents" funding such projects. Jeffries's ambition was to produce sound cinema's "first all-Negro musical western".

To fund his project, Jeffries approached a veteran B-movie producer named Jed Buell. When Buell wanted to know of a likely candidate for the lead role, Jeffries nominated himself. Having grown up partly on his grandfather's farm, he had all the requisite horse-riding and roping skills, beside a fine singing voice, but Buell expressed concerns; Jeffries, whose mother was of Irish descent, was "not black enough". Eventually they went ahead, using make-up to darken the leading man's skin tone.

Harlem on the Prairie (1937) was shot over five days at a dude ranch near Victorville, California, with Jeffries performing all his own stunts. Though critical reception was mixed, the film received a write-up in Time magazine and grossed \$50,000 in its first 12 months. Jeffries went on to star in another three musical westerns over the next two years. Though in later life he would refer to them jokingly as "C-

movies", he took great pride in their production, embarking on publicity tours in a Cadillac with steer horns on the front and his name emblazoned on the side in gold rope. "After the picture I'd do rope tricks, spin my gun and sing songs from the movie," he recalled. "Wherever I went kids would follow me through the street, not only black kids but white kids too."

By the time of *Harlem Rides the Range* in 1939, black-only theatres were beginning to dwindle, along with audience appeal. Jeffries turned instead to jazz, his second great boyhood love. A visit to a Detroit jazz club during the promotional tour for *Harlem Rides the Range* prompted him to join the Duke Ellington Orchestra as a lead vocalist. It was here that he proved his talent as a mature singer, demonstrating his faultless intonation and wide vocal range in such songs as *I Don't Know What Kind of Blues I've Got*, *The Brownskin Gal* and *Jump for Joy* (all 1941). For the Orchestra's 1940 recording of *Flamingo*, he honed the rich melodic baritone – developed in homage to Bing Crosby – that provided it with its biggest hit. Jeffries subsequently recorded the song on five different occasions, and by 1980 it had sold 13 million copies.

Throughout his life Herb Jeffries remained cagey about his origins. He claimed to have been born Umberto Alejandro Valentino (sometimes he said it was Balentino) in Detroit, Miami, to an Irish mother and a Sicilian father of mixed race; on other occasions he gave his birth name as Herbert Ironton Jeffries. His birth date was probably September 24 1913, though the year also tended to vary. His father, whom Herbert never met, was said to have Ethiopian, French, Italian and Moorish heritage. Herb was raised by his mother in a boarding house and grew up "a ghetto baby", learning to ride on his grandfather's Michigan farm.

When money grew scarce in the aftermath of the Wall Street crash he dropped out of high school to earn a living as a singer. Intensely musical from boyhood, he began performing in a local speakeasy where he caught the attention of Louis Armstrong, who gave the teenager a note of recommendation for Erskine Tate at the Savoy Ballroom in Chicago. Knowing that Tate fronted an all-black band, Jeffries claimed to be a Creole, and was offered a position as a featured singer three nights a week. Later he toured with Earl "Fatha" Hines's Orchestra in the Deep South. There he was struck by the realities of segregation, as the Orchestra's playing was restricted to tobacco warehouses and the tin-roofed black-only movie theatres. Watching young boys fill the building to watch the latest western, Jeffries resolved to create a cowboy hero geared specifically for such an audience.

Yet Jeffries's pride in his own mixed-race heritage did not always sit comfortably with the more binary outlook of a pre-Civil Rights Act America. When, in

1959, he married the burlesque performer Tempest Storm, he drew considerable attention by giving his “colour of race” on the marriage certificate as white. “I recognise no race and no colour, only American,” he told reporters. “We’re all so mixed up racially that the blanks mean nothing.”

After a spell in France where he ran The Flamingo, a nightclub named after his greatest hit, he returned to the United States in the early 1960s and opened a Los Angeles counterpart to his Paris club. He also wrote for theatre and nightclub acts.

A 1992 tribute concert to the singing cowboys, together with the discovery of several Jeffries films among some 100 old film cans in a Texas cellar, triggered a resurgence of interest in the Bronze Buckaroo’s legacy. In later years he gave numerous interviews for print and television, and made the occasional foray into the music industry, with a well-received album of western songs in 1995 entitled *The Bronze Buckaroo Rides Again* and various performances at the Village Vanguard in New York City. Aged 96 he appeared in concert in Oceanside, California, alongside his son Robert.

Herb Jeffries was married five times, including his 10-year marriage to Tempest Storm. He his survived by his fifth wife, Savannah, and by five children.

Herb Jeffries, born September 24 1913, died May 25 2014

Obituary reproduced with the kind permission of The Daily Telegraph. Article published originally on 13 July, 2014

Forty Years On: A Post Script

I need to correct a wrong impression I gave in my article *Forty Years On* in the last issue. In my paragraph on page 13 about the Ellington Itinerary I wrote that Klaus Stratemann ‘based the “Interludes” in his book *DE – Day By Day And Film By Film*, on the unpublished Igo itinerary. I have been told that this is not so, and that Klaus researched his “interludes” quite independently of Igo’s work, by himself with assistance from others. If I’d looked more carefully at the Acknowledgements prefacing Klaus’s book I would have avoided the error, since he states clearly that Gordon Ewing, who continued Igo’s work after his death, came to Klaus’s own researches ‘at a rather late stage’.

In fairness to myself (though not in an attempt to justify what I wrote), the Igo Itinerary was never published and I have never seen it; nor have I ever seen an article explaining how Klaus went about his work. All I had to go on was this sequence of events known to me:

In the late 1970s the five Hindsight/London LPs of Capitol Transcriptions appeared. Patricia Willard’s notes included an acknowledgement of ‘Joseph H Igo, author of the forthcoming reference, *The Ellington Chronicle*.’ Forthcoming never came forth. In 1985 Klaus Stratemann gave Ellington ’85 conference attenders a small booklet *Duke Ellington On Film – A Summary*. It included no mention of an Ellington Itinerary. In 1992 his massive book *Duke Ellington Day By Day And Film By Film* was published, in which the 55 Interludes between films amount to a full-scale Itinerary spanning the years from autumn 1929 to May 1974 (Duke’s death). By then I was friendly with Art Pilkington and knew that he and others including Gordon Ewing were expanding Igo’s chronicle.

My paragraph sums up these activities and names some of the people involved. But I was wrong to infer from the sequence I’ve outlined here that Igo and his successors in some degree ‘begat’ Stratemann. They were working independently and in parallel, it appears. It was in no way my intention to belittle Klaus’s achievement or to enhance Igo’s, whose work is unknown to me, and presumably always will be. I own up to loose terminology, though not to deliberate distortion.

The lack of an authoritative article outlining the details of how Klaus tackled his work and made his contribution is unfortunate. It would remove misunderstandings.

Roger Boyes

In addition to the recording of *Black, Brown and Beige* orchestrated and conducted by Maurice Peress which was reviewed by Roger Boyes in *BL* 20/3, **Ron Malings** writes:

I would like to mention another performance of Peress' version of BB & B. This is by the Louie Bellson All Star Orchestra conducted by Peress and the sound of the band is significantly different from the version I have on Nimbus. Among those to be heard are Barrie Lee Hall, Britt Woodman, Art Baron, Scott Robinson and - most significantly - Clark Terry. I quote from Peress' notes accompanying the CD.

"When I worked with Ellington... he was very insistent that the closing solo of 'Come Sunday'... should not be played by another alto saxophonist..." In the Bellson performance it is played by Terry on fluegelhorn and Peress adds: "I suspect that Duke would have approved."

In the performance by the American Composers Orchestra under Peress the alto solo is played by Frank Wess.

The Bellson performance, along with his own 'Ellington-Strayhorn Suite' was released on Music Masters Jazz 01612-65096-2.

Going South: Representation in the *Deep South Suite*

Keynote address to Duke Ellington Conference

2014, Amsterdam

David Schiff: Reed College, Portland, Oregon USA



Let me begin by saying what a great honour it is just to hang out with such a group of eminent Ellingtonians, let alone to be invited, by our most distinguished hosts Walter and Louis, to give a keynote talk for the 22nd International Duke Ellington Study Group Conference. Given the amount of knowledge, expertise and, I'm sure, opinions in the room I look forward to your questions or corrections.

In my abstract I promised to discuss both the *Deep South Suite* and the *New Orleans Suite*—but, given our time restraints, I'll limit myself to the *Deep South*, indeed just to its first two movements. (I hope my remarks will complement the extended discussion of this work in *Lonesome Roads and Streets of Dreams* by Andrew Berish.) Before I start down my own lonesome roads I want to say how in re-hearing the *Deep South Suite* I was reminded once again of what an astonishing mountain range of large scale masterpieces Ellington and Strayhorn created in the 1940s: *Black, Brown and Beige*, *New World A-Coming*, *Perfume Suite*, *Deep South Suite*, *Liberian Suite* and *A Tone Parallel to Harlem*—an unprecedented achievement in American music, which nevertheless encountered considerable critical resistance at the time—and even now.

Nearly seventy years after its premiere, the *Deep South Suite* remains, to borrow a title from a different Ellington masterpiece, a swampy river. It carries in its currents many of the questions that abound in Ellington scholarship and criticism: questions of authorship, political intent and artistic success. It premiered in November 1946, first in Chicago, then at Carnegie Hall. Its four movement structure and collaborative authorship paralleled that of the *Perfume*

Suite that had premiered at Carnegie two years earlier in December 1944; both works are four movement quasi-symphonies with one movement serving as a display of Ellington's piano playing and another as a display of Strayhorn's daring modernism. Both suites juxtapose movements that go down easily with others that are more provocative. Their parallel structures make the suites fraternal twins, a close relationship that reminds us that in Ellington's music the personal is often political.

In 1946, we might remind ourselves, the American South was a one-party apartheid society, the Klu Klux Klan still operated without police intervention and lynchings were still an accepted form of justice; in Congress, Southern senators and representatives prevented the passage of any civil rights legislation. The political intent of the *Deep South Suite* was originally recited by Leonard Feather as an introduction to the V-disc recording. The words Feather recorded reappeared as Ellington's own account in *Music is My Mistress*: "The Deep South is many things to many people, but here (in *Magnolia's Just Dripping with Molasses*) we were content to reproduce what might be called the Dixie Chamber of Commerce dream picture.... *Hearsay* was concerned with other things...that were not at all in accordance with the Chamber of Commerce dream picture, things that were at times almost directly the opposite." (MIMM p. 184) These understated but clearly aimed remarks were further amplified by Mercer Ellington in *Duke Ellington in Person*. Nevertheless James Lincoln Collier claimed that "it is difficult to relate the program to the music" (280).

Today, I want to consider the relation of music and programme—or music and representation—from a different perspective. Given the absence of lyrics in the *Deep South Suite* its representation of the South is—apart from the titles—strictly musical, but how does music represent anything, let alone a subject as fraught with history and mythology as the South? Before we can begin to pass judgment on the success or failure of representation we first must determine what musical mechanisms or devices could be used to this end.

In discussions of classical music, scholars use the term "topic" for musical metaphors; these devices enabled Mozart, for example, to indicate the gender, class and mental states of characters in his operas by relating the specific music of the operas to commonplaces of Mozart's musical culture: modes, rhythms, or melodic shapes that bore a considerable baggage of meaning. One famous instance of this use of topics, for instance, comes in the ballroom scene in *Don Giovanni* where Mozart superimposes three genres of dance to differentiate the social classes of three groups of dancers.

Are there similar "topics" in jazz? Let me begin to answer that question by posing a different one: in the

three famous train pieces from the Ellington/Strayhorn repertory, *Daybreak Express*, *Take the 'A' Train*, and *Happy-go-lucky Local*, in what direction are the trains moving? How can we tell — and why does it matter? Actually we know for certain the answer for one piece: the A train, as the lyrics tell us, is headed uptown — northward to Sugar Hill in Harlem. I suspect, though, that many listeners also assume that the *Daybreak Express* is headed north, because north is the direction of emancipation, of escape from slavery and segregation and racist violence. The jubilant tone of the music certainly suggests a freedom-bound trajectory. We might expect therefore that the implication of a southbound musical route would be correspondingly horrific, as it is, exceptionally, in *Strange Fruit*, and yet American popular song from Stephen Foster to Gladys Knight, has celebrated southward train travel not in terms of horror but of nostalgia whether for the Swanee River or that old Kentucky home.

The contrasting ideas of northbound liberation and southbound nostalgia actually have a long cultural history. You can hear them clearly figured in the lyrics of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic* ("Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord") versus those of Dixie ("I wish I were in the land of cotton/Old times there are not forgotten"), but they predate the Civil War. In his great study *Patriotic Gore*, Edmund Wilson claimed that the two sides in the war had "reciprocal myths". The North pictured itself as pursuing a holy crusade, while the South as early as the 1820s had wrapped itself in notions of gallantry and aristocratic living, a romantic view that Mark Twain blamed on the influence of Sir Walter Scott; in *Life on the Mississippi* Twain called the South's love of ghosts and phantoms the "Sir Walter disease".

Neither myth had much basis in reality. After the war, the North, far from turning into a promised land of faith and freedom, became an industrial powerhouse, whose working conditions—as pictured for instance in *The Jungle*—might be termed a more advanced form of slavery. Both before and after the war the South was largely impoverished and backward with just a handful of wealthy families living "graciously"; The Sir Walter disease, nevertheless, persisted, and not just in the South, not least through *Gone With the Wind*.

In music the opposed theatics of Biblical hopes and rose-tinted dreams reproduced themselves in two streams of American song, the African American sorrow songs, or spirituals, and the popular songs stemming from blackface minstrelsy. Stephen Foster, a Pennsylvania-born white Northerner, laid the foundation for American popular song in the 1840s and 50s with his ersatz Plantation Melodies such as *The Old Folks at Home*, *My Old Kentucky Home* and

Old Black Joe, among many others. These hugely popular songs portrayed a longing for the South, a land full of happy "darkies" either dancing merrily or sadly mourning at the grave of their dear deceased Massa.

After the Civil War this antebellum formula was reborn and continued to evolve in the commercial music of Tin Pan Alley. A half-century after emancipation minstrel song stereotypes still appeared in such hit tunes as in *My Mammy* (1918), *Dinah* (1925) or Gershwin's first hit, *Swanee*. While these songs avoided the more egregious racial stereotypes of their predecessors they nevertheless preserved the illusory sentimentalized picture of the Southland in their lyrics and in their manner of performance: blackface performances by such singers as Al Jolson, Eddie Cantor and even Fred Astaire continued as late as the 1930s.

During the same time period, however, beginning with the first concerts and subsequent international acclaim of the Fisk Jubilee Singers in the 1870s, the repertory of the spiritual, including *Go Down, Moses, Steal Away* and *Deep River* came to represent African American resistance and aspirations. In *The Souls of Black Folk*, published in 1903, W.E. B. Dubois wrote: "Through all the sorrow of the Sorrow Songs there breathes a hope—a faith in the ultimate justice of things. The minor cadences of despair change often to triumph and calm confidence." (cited in *Deep River*, p.35)

The relation between these two genres is complicated, neither black and white or even black and blackface. One of the most popular southbound songs, *Carry Me Back to Old Virginny* was composed by the African American singer/songwriter James Bland. The Fisk Jubilee singers recorded Foster's *Old Black Joe*; Charles Ives used fragments of that song as a kind of cantus firmus to evoke the spirits of African American soldiers in the first of his *Three Places in New England*, —and jazz musicians drew on both genres, sometimes, but not always, with irony or at least discomfort.

We can hear the presence of these two genres—and two directions—in two popular songs from the 1920s: *Alabamy Bound* and *Dear Old Southland*. First let's listen to a bit of Al Jolson's 1939 recording of *Alabamy Bound* one of the most popular songs of the 1920s through the 1950s. *Alabamy Bound* quickly entered the jazz repertory; here are two very early versions first by Paul Whiteman from 1924, second by Fletcher Henderson in 1925. In all three versions you'll hear a disconnect between the older minstrel style and the new idiom of jazz, most obviously in Louis Armstrong's hot solo on the Henderson recording—but how do we interpret the contrast? Henderson begins with the train whistle, while

Whiteman saves it for the end. Does that indicate a change in direction?

Listen to three instrumental versions of *Dear Old Southland*, written in 1921 by Turner Layton and Henry Creamer and based on two spirituals: *Deep River* and *Sometimes I Feel like a Motherless Child*. First we will hear Louis Armstrong from 1930, then Paul Whiteman from 1921 and finally Ellington's recording from 1934 (Ellington gave a quite different solo piano rendition in 1940.) The vocal on the Ellington is by Louis Bacon.

These three performances are very different from one another. Armstrong plays it reverently, like a hymn, as if he were really playing the two spirituals—he indulges in only one hot break. Whiteman's version, by sharp contrast, plays the song in a banjo—strumming minstrel-show style, throws in a medley of Foster tunes and bits of Dixie, turns *Motherless Child* into an up-tempo tango and *Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen* into a sleek foxtrot before concluding with a bit more of Foster's *Old Folks at Home*. The Whiteman arrangement mixes minstrel song and sorrow song as if they were indistinguishable rather than inimical. As we will soon see, this odd stylistic stew foreshadows Ellington's more pointed blending of genres in the *Deep South Suite*.

But first, what are we to make of Ellington's performance of *Dear Old Southland* from 1933? It is up-tempo and so does not feel like a spiritual, but it also contains none of the minstrel style elements that are so conspicuous in the Whiteman recording. We might say that Ellington has translated the spirituals into the jazz idiom so that the melody is immediately subject to improvisatory treatment—but how do we interpret Louis Bacon's nearly wordless vocal? It sounds like a parody, but what would be its target? One explanation of such an irreverent touch, if that is what it is, would be the debate within African American culture about the special standing given the repertory of the spirituals especially in relation to the blues and jazz. Zora Neale Hurston, for instance, (as noted by Paul Allen Anderson in his study, *Deep River*) ridiculed the well-mannered concert spirituals “for squeezing all of the rich black juice out of the songs and presenting a sort of musical octoroon to the public.” (DR p. 172). In his essay *The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain*, published in 1926, Langston Hughes argued that jazz was “one of the inherent expressions of Negro life in America: the eternal tom-tom beating in the Negro soul” while he identified the spirituals with what he termed the “unconscious ‘white is best’ mentality of the black bourgeoisie. (DR p. 177) We might say then that Ellington's *Dear Old Southland* put the juice—and the tomtom--back in the song.

Before turning, at long last, to the *Deep South Suite*, I just want to restate the terms of our two musical topics. The sorrow songs were seen, for the most part, as African American emblems of pride, dignity and justice. The latter day plantation melodies, or neo-minstrelsy, were secular songs, often show tunes, aimed at white audiences, even when written or performed by African Americans. As sacred texts, the spirituals offered an alternative to the degrading images perpetuated in popular song, but they could not interact with that inimical genre. Such interaction—through parody, irony, erasure or what Henry Lewis Gates terms ‘signifyin’ demanded a more transgressive idiom than that of the spirituals—it demanded the allusive, subversive strategies of the blues or jazz.

The first movement of the *Deep South Suite* bears the title *Magnolias Just Dripping with Molasses*, but Ellington's short score calls it *Pseudo*—making his intentions even clearer. It is a little over four and a half minutes long, fifty percent longer than Ellington's usual three minutes, and is constructed out of thirteen distinct phrases, labeled in Ellington's manuscript as: Introduction, piano phrase, then phrases A-K. In MIMM Ellington wrote that the music attempted to “reproduce what might be called the Dixie Chamber of Commerce dream picture, with beautiful blue skies, Creole gals with flashing eyes, fried chicken, watermelons and all those good old nostalgic memories.” (MIMM p184) In other words the music exposes the pseudo-South through the imagery of minstrel song—but how does it make this audible? Andrew Berish has claimed that the irony is only spelled out in the solos by Lawrence Brown and Jimmy Hamilton that quote bits of *Dixie*, and *The Old Folks at Home*, but is somehow counteracted by the general “upbeat and exciting” feel of the music. Berish portrays Ray Nance, Brown and Hamilton as “the main musical actors and inventors” and questions accounts of the piece that impute “too much intent to Ellington as composer.”

I believe a look at Ellington's manuscript short score from the Ellington Archive at the Smithsonian Museum of American History gives us a different picture. The sketch is complete but is laid out in Ellington's typical montage form with some phrases indicated as inserts. On the first page we see is an intriguing three-part contrapuntal figure in the slow introduction. Against a descending chromatic melody two voices play the opening notes of *Old Folks at Home*—way down upon the Swanee River—in parallel major thirds—the harmonic equivalent of molasses. We find a second half-hidden Stephen Foster tune in the trombone at the end of phrase C—it plays another phrase from *Old Folks at Home*, the one to the words “All de world am (sad and dreamy). These two melodic fragments, hinting at a text and then not

stating it, set up the climactic allusion in the piece which appears first at phrase E with a burst in the brass that riffs on the opening phrase of *Dixie* (Oh I wish I were in the land of cotton). This allusion returns at phrase J- a repeated five-note figure to the alluding to opening of that phrase “But I wish I were” from *Dixie*; it never follows through to state the apparently unspeakable title. These carefully placed, artfully cropped allusions would have been an open invitation for the soloists to follow suit even if they had received no further oral instructions in rehearsal.

Ellington originally indicated a Charleston groove for the phrase that follows his piano introduction; he replaced this version of this phrase with an insert for saxes: a multi-tiered *Klangfarbenmelodie* on the pitch F superimposing four different rhythmic figures. To my ear this fascinating texture is meant to evoke a train: not a gospel train headed north but a sleek, segregated, streamliner headed south. Notice that the first time the phrase ends in a quizzical gesture, but the second time it goes to a grinning fanfare for four trumpets which almost whistles *Dixie*—perhaps the official, de rigueur, welcome aboard to the white passengers from the black porters.

This potent little phrase helps frame the entire *Deep South Suite* between two contrasting train “topics”—a southbound speeding express and a local moving slowly northward to a happy-go-lucky rhythm-and-blues groove; the two topics signal a metaphoric tension between the mechanisms of white power and black resistance, but we also hear this contrast within *Magnolias* itself. The tone of *Magnolias*, switches half-way through with Taft Jordan’s entrance—a very different fanfare from the official greeting heard earlier. From here to the end the voice of the music is the voice of the blues, or the voices of the blues musicians in the segregated rear car of the train. Above phrase F in the manuscript Ellington writes (if I am deciphering it correctly) “Pseudo Dixieland/ Jazzmine earthiness...Have never witnessed these heavenly (Etherealities) by their Chamber of Commerce...interpretation.” Following this instruction the solos mock the fake platitudes of the south. In the closing phrase these blues voices crescendo in an upward chromatic scale that reverses the sticky plantation sentiments heard at the very opening.

On close examination of the score, then, *Magnolias* turns out to be a slyly intertextual composition that half-hides and half-reveals very specific allusions by manipulating the topics of minstrel song and the blues. The choice of minstrel allusions, their fragmented hidden nature and their blues-inflected re-composition challenges their representational standing, as if they had all been printed in italics or surrounded by scare quotes. Much as this tactic may remind us of the role that composers like Charles Ives and Igor Stravinsky

gave to allusions or quotations in their work, we should remind ourselves that intertextual allusion is an essential strategy of blues music in general and of jazz improvisation in particular.

It is fascinating to turn from Ellington’s manuscript score for *Pseudo* to Strayhorn’s manuscript score for *Hearsay*. Unlike the on-page building-block multi-thematic construction we find in Ellington sketches, Strayhorn’s score looks like it was fully formed in his head before it was written down. *Hearsay* is a large ternary design AABACBA, all clearly developed out of the trumpet melody. Strayhorn begins the movement with a slow introduction that contains those same sticky parallel thirds we heard at the start of *Magnolias*—but without the Foster allusion. In Strayhorn’s sharply dissonant harmonization the figure evokes Debussy (*La Mer*) rather than Foster. The re-interpreted echo of *Magnolias* in effect pulls our ears out of the molasses and tells us to wake up to what is really happening.

Like *Strange Feeling* from the *Perfume Suite*, *Hearsay* exemplifies Strayhorn’s modernist side, but within the context of the *Deep South Suite*, we can hear the daring harmonies, carefully constructed tension, even the avoidance of any improvisation, itself as a topic, a musical metaphor. Where Ellington situated the jazz idiom in relation to the alien topic of minstrel song, Strayhorn locates *Hearsay* at a different contested border, European modernist composition, with hints of Debussy and Berg. The ternary design of the piece accentuates this contrast by wrapping a ballad melody around a central episode that differs sharply in metre, texture and mood (while at the same time developing ideas from the bridge of the ballad). It builds to a shocking climax, and then, equally shocking, returns to its opening melody as if nothing had happened, a dramatic irony reminiscent, again, of Alban Berg. Where Ellington’s use of the minstrelsy topic locates his music in relation to a long, painful history, Strayhorn’s modernist topic places the music in the equally painful present moment, undoing nostalgia with graphic realism.

Yes there’s even more, folks: *No One Was Watching* and *Happy Go Lucky Local*, different from each other and from the previous movements. The *Deep South Suite* is a vast panorama, but I hope my discussion of just some of its aspects will lead to further explorations of the whole suite.

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DUKE ELLINGTON IN GRÖNA LUND 1963: A NEW RELEASE FROM STORYVILLE RECORDS

From their website www.storyvillerecords.com:

For a band that had been on the road for 32 years, the six day engagement at Gröna Lund Tivoli in Stockholm offered Duke Ellington And His Orchestra the rare leisure of staying in the same place for several days. The orchestra played at the outdoor stage at Gröna Lund every evening, but on the 8th of June 1963 they later moved to an indoor restaurant called Dance Inn. Here, the band played in a relaxed setting for dancing. They did 2 long sets that you can hear on this 2 CD set.

"The atmosphere was at a peak level both on the scene and on the dance floor", Leif Anderson observed in "Orkester Journalen" - the legendary Swedish jazz magazine.

The Duke Ellington Orchestra at this time featured Swedish trumpeter Rolf "Roffe" Ericson and the audience was in for a treat: a chance to hear a few seldom-heard tunes, and the joy of hearing and feeling the sound of the great orchestra up close and in the moment.

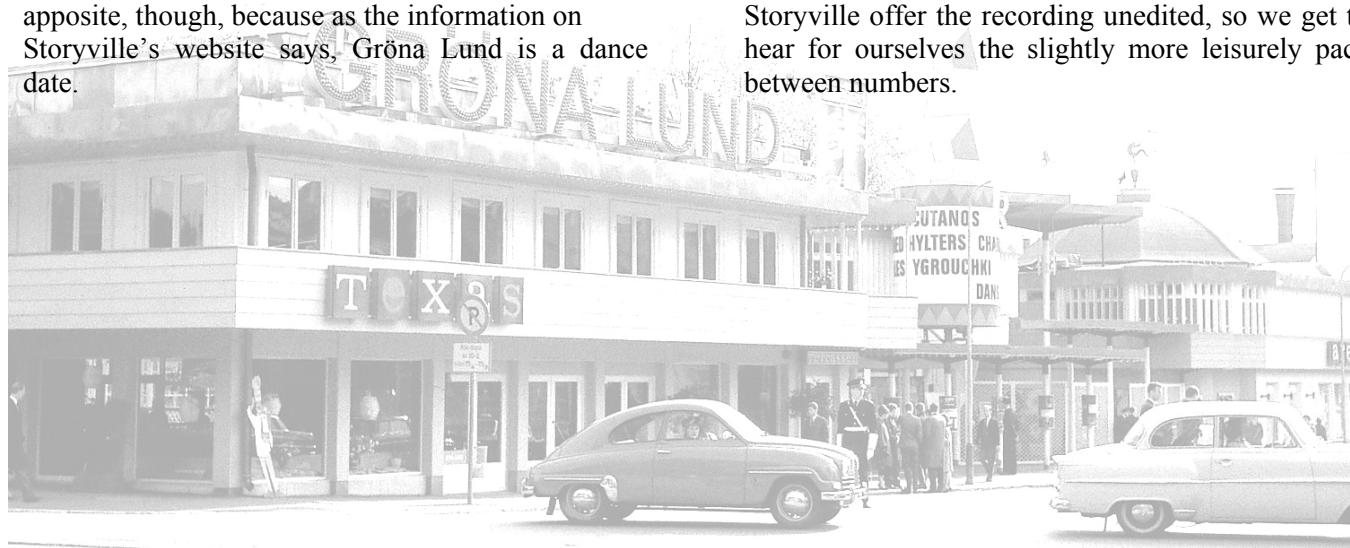
Storyville Records continues to demonstrate its pre-eminent position as the most important publisher of Duke Ellington's recordings with a clutch of new releases, choicest of which, perhaps, is a new two disc set, *Duke Ellington in Gröna Lund, 1963*.

Comparisons will be made, inevitably, with *The Great Paris Concert*, an album long known to Ellington aficionados and recorded during the orchestra's earlier sojourn on the continent in February of that year. True enough, there are numbers common to both recordings, not least all four movements of *Suite Thursday*. A comparison with the *All-Star Road Band* albums might be more apposite, though, because as the information on Storyville's website says, Gröna Lund is a dance date.

Tivoli Gröna Lund (the name means 'The Green Grove') is an amusement park in Stockholm. It was founded by James Schultheiss in 1833 who rented the area for carousels and other diversions. The park is built around old residential and commercial structures dating from that time.

Had Ellington not continued to take his band on the road playing dance dates and proms, his music making would, to my mind, have been diminished. That he was compelled economically to do so says something about the unequal relationship between art and the market place. Whilst not a prophet without honour in his own country, Ellington and his music found recognition of an altogether different stripe here in Europe. Whenever the orchestra played Paris, for example, the patrons always expected Ellington to pull from the bag some *chef d'œuvre* for their delectation. It pleases me to believe that *Suite Thursday* was still in the book from its performance in Paris some four months earlier. On the recording here, the listener may hear Duke calling 'Monterey' in readiness a couple of numbers before they play the piece. It was composed, of course, for the Monterey Jazz Festival in 1960, Steinbeck's own state of California being an entirely appropriate location for the work's première. Whilst Ellington did play selections from the same recording sessions by way of pieces from *The Nutcracker Suite* at dance dates at military bases in the early sixties, nevertheless, a full quarter of an hour given over to a concert creation was perhaps more appropriate for his European audience.

How does this difference between the two types of engagement manifest itself on this recording? Storyville offer the recording unedited, so we get to hear for ourselves the slightly more leisurely pace between numbers.



These spaces are evocative in themselves of these occasions. The soloists stretch out much more – there is a languorous version of ***Black And Tan Fantasy*** here which clocks in at seven-and-a half minutes which includes a luminous excursion on clarinet from Russell Procope and some rambunctious brass work from Ray Nance and Lawrence Brown; the crescendi to several of the numbers may be a little rough-hewn but much more spontaneous and exuberant than studio or concert performances and there are fewer flowery Ducal announcements but much more from ‘the piano player’s’ keyboard, delicate, ruminative melodies not altogether typical of his style. The second disc opens with six and a half minutes of ***Intermission Music***, solo extemporised piano which is quite magical and drifts across the floor like motes of dust dancing in beams of summer sunlight.

Whilst, on my copy at least, there seems to be in the first couple of numbers a little ‘wow and flutter’ on the tape and on more than one occasion the volume of Ellington’s announcements comes perilously close to blowing the microphone, this dance date is recorded exceptionally well. In mono throughout, a great deal of space is to the sound stage is nevertheless suggested and there is much detail, particularly in the way the rhythm section has been recorded. Having enjoyed their contribution to this set, it was interesting to learn from Ken Steiner’s atmospheric liner notes that this was due, in no small measure, to the presence of Ernie Shepherd on bass. Ellington’s description of the bassist, quoted by Ken in his notes, as ‘Blanton with an added bop flair’ is right on the money and with Duke’s usual pertinence describes exactly the satisfactions to be had in listening to Shepherd’s work.

There are riches a plenty in this release: Ellington’s affinity for Sweden, evident then most recently in his work with Alice Babs in the recording studios of Paris, sealed here with the inclusion in the brass section of Roffe Ericson who steps up to the plate for a mellifluous solo on ***Lullaby Of Birdland***; Paul Gonsalves’ insinuating, leonine solos on ***Laura*** and ***In A Sentimental Mood***, nudging the melody into all sorts of corners; Johnny Hodges on ***Jeep’s Blues***; Cootie Williams’ continuing triumphal progress on ***New Concerto For Cootie***. And then suddenly, during Ray Nance’s antics on ***One More Once*** the music drifts off into the balmy evening like a carnival balloon. Essential listening.

Ian Bradley

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

In the final couple of sentences of Chairman's Chat in the last edition of *Blue Light* (volume 21/2 : the rare “collectors’ item” with the white cover, chosen by your editor to enable the flyer from the Amsterdam conference to be reproduced as clearly as possible) I promised further news of forthcoming changes in the membership of your committee. So, here goes! At the Amsterdam AGM your Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer each gave one year’s notice of their intentions to stand down at the 2015 AGM. Other committee members could also decide, nearer the time, not to seek re-election.

It is possible that some of the vacancies could be filled from within our current committee membership but it is clear that new members will be needed in some posts to ensure the continuity of our Society. The one position that almost certainly will have to be filled from beyond our current committee is that of Treasurer. Victor Lawrence stepped forward in response to an appeal I circulated to all members in 2010 and was co-opted onto the committee in January 2011 along with, *inter alia*, Catherine Coates as Secretary. They were both then formally elected at the AGM held on 7th May 2011.

Please be assured that these anticipated changes to your committee, after a significant period of stability, are only to be expected and, unlike some changes in our early years, do not indicate any disharmony. We are a happy ship and, with members' support, will continue to be so.

So, could you please give serious consideration to how you could help your Society? Our new Treasurer need not necessarily be a qualified accountant but should have some aptitude for financial matters. Also Victor has, for over two years, been acting Membership Secretary: a role which ideally should be separate from that of Treasurer. I would welcome telephone calls or emails from any member wishing to know more about our forthcoming vacancies. My contact details can be found, as always, on Page 2 and at this stage all enquiries will be on a strictly confidential basis.

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

Peter Caswell

On Record

The reviews by Bruce Crowther and Hugh Rainey are reproduced with the kind permission of the Editor of *Jazz Journal*.

PAUL GONSALVES/ TUBBY HAYES

JUST FRIENDS

Tupa; Amber Moods; Just friends; Pedro's Walk; Baby Blue; Souraya; Mini Minor.

Paul Gonsalves (ts); Tubby Hayes (as, ts, vibes); Jackie Sharpe (t); Jimmy Deuchar (t, mellophone); Les Condon (t); Keith Christie (tb); Stan Tracey (p); Lennie Bush (b); Ronnie Stephenson (d).

Lansdowne Studios, London, 1965.

(Original LP SCX 6003)

THE JOHNNY SCOTT ORCHESTRA

LONDON SWINGS

Let's All Go Down The Strand; They're Changing Guard At Buckingham Palace; Chelsea Bridge; Knocked 'Em In The Old Kent Road Wotcher; The Trees In Grosvenor Square; Limehouse Blues; London By Night; Greek Street Soho; A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square; Covent Garden Starts Early; Springtime In Piccadilly Circus; London Bridge Is Falling Down.

Leon Calvert, Greg Bowen, Ray Davies, Eddie Blair, Ian Hamer (t); Don Lusher, Jock Bain, Maurice Pratt, Jackie Armstrong (tb); Roy Willox, Al Newman, Bob Efford, Duncan Lamont, Ronnie Ross (reeds); John Marson, Michael Jefferies (harp); Judd Proctor (gtr); Alan Branscombe (p); Arthur Watts (b); Barry Morgan (d); unidentified strings led by Tony Gilbert.

Abbey Road Studios, London, 1966.

(Original LP TWO 118)

Vocalion CDSML 842 2011

In an age when any CD much short of 60 minutes playing time would be considered poor value, *Just Friends*, which clocks in at just over 37 minutes, is twinned with *London Swings* by the Johnny Scott Orchestra. From a strictly Ellington-connected point of view the latter has little relation to the former, other than Strayhorn's *Chelsea Bridge*. In a perfect world *Just Friends* would have been married on this CD to the other Gonsalves and Hayes LP, *Change Of Setting* (1967) which is generally viewed to be the better and allows Hayes more space. Sadly this rare album, due for reissue three years ago, never appeared, the master tape having apparently been lost. (The original LP can

be found on Ebay at £49.99. *Music Stack* has three copies on offer ranging from £100 to £204.29. If you have both the money and the technology, it is available from *LondonJazzCollector* on reel-to-reel for £200. If all these 'bargains' are beyond your budget a track from the album, *Don't Fall Off The Bridge*, can be found on *You Tube*.)

And now to the album in question. *Just Friends* was as hard to find as the aforementioned *Change Of Setting* and here makes its first appearance on CD. The session opens apace with tenors in unison then in tandem on the Gonsalves/ Hayes penned *Tupa*. There are some fine exchanges before a final coda which is truncated by fade-out. (A device which always leaves me feeling robbed and to my mind suggests 'we would like to have gone on, but we ran out of time').

Amber Mood, composed and arranged by Deuchar, is a feature for Gonsalves who glides effortlessly. Deuchar takes a short eight bars before another fade-out.

The title track, *Just Friends*, which one would expect by its designation to feature solos by both saxes features only Paul Gonsalves followed by Jimmy Deuchar on mellophone. An opening solo, slightly in excess of three minutes, gives way to an excursion by Deuchar and closes with a second shorter solo by Gonsalves. To my less than expert ear the mellophone has the sound of a hybrid of the flugelhorn and trombone. It is a derivative of the mellophonium which, I am informed, utilizes a bell-front design as opposed to the wrapped French horn. The instrument, adopted by Stan Kenton, did not find favour with other bands. (View it in action on You Tube, *A Hell Of A Bell*, Tubby Hayes, Jazz 625, part five.)

Stan Tracey opens *Pedro's Walk* which, as it develops rapidly, takes Pedro from a walk to a run. Fine exchanges between 'Mex' and 'Tubbs' end in a race for the line.

Next up, *Baby Blue*, a Stan Tracey composition, features solos from both tenors and some fine bass work by Lennie Bush. *Souraya* features Hayes on the vibes in his own composition. Gonsalves, definitely with his eyes closed on this one, slides sensually towards an emotional climax. *Mini Minor* motors to an energetically appropriate conclusion. Paul solos, followed by Christie on trombone, then Tracey and finally Ronnie Stephenson on drums.

A rewarding recording. My only gripe is that there is never quite enough of the tenor men together. Of the seven tracks on this album, Gonsalves and Hayes share reed solos only on three.

There is not space here to review fully *London Swings*. It is both colourful and whimsical and if you enjoy the marriage between strings and reeds, you will find much to enjoy. Whatever its merits, it is no compensation (in ‘our world’) for the absence of the aforementioned Gonsalves and Hayes album *Change Of Setting*. Let’s hope the master tape eventually turns up.

Chris Addison

COLEMAN HAWKINS/CLARK TERRY BACK IN BEAN'S BAG

*A Tune For The Tutor; ¹Don't Worry 'Bout Me; Just Squeeze Me; Feedin' The Bean; ²Michelle; Squeeze Me; ³Tommy's Blues; Ain't Misbehavin'; *Intro: The Simple Waltz; **Things Ain't What They Used To Be; ***I'm Confessin'.* (70:04)
Coleman Hawkins (ts), Clark Terry (tp, flh), Tommy Flanagan (p), Major Holley (b), Dave Bailey (d) NYC. 10 December 1962. ¹omit Hawk. ²omit Clark. ³omit both.

*Terry with Dick Hyman (p), Art Davis (b), Osie Johnson (d). **add Willie Dennis (tb). ***Hawk with Sonny Clark (p), Chuck Israels (b), Roy Haynes (d). all Village Gate NYC. 9 October 1962

Essential Jazz Classics EJC 55595

The LP *Back In Bean's Bag* (Columbia CS8791) presented the first recorded collaboration between Hawkins and Terry, backed by the smoothly swinging Tommy Flanagan trio, who regularly worked at the time with Hawkins. Each immediately recognizable, these two great stylists complement each other perfectly, sounding mutually inspired throughout a relaxed and productive session. Hawk's authoritative, muscular-toned and master-crafted solos surge ahead with an unstoppable rolling momentum. In more mercurial fashion, Terry's phrasing bubbles and flies around the melody with bright rounded tone, agile and inventive both lyrically and rhythmically. In joint melody statements, the tightly synchronised voicing is impeccable.

The loping and bluesy opener establishes the easy relaxed swing which follows, for which much credit to the fine backing. Both Hawk and Clark impress in sumptuous ballad solo features. (Hawk's feature *Michelle* is a Clark Terry original, not the Beatles song). Tommy's solo feature was not used on the LP, but was worthy of inclusion. Also recorded but perhaps understandably dropped was a lengthy *Ain't Misbehavin'*, with Hawk sounding uncharacteristically unsettled.

The live bonus tracks [here asterisked] feature both of the stars, though not together, from a memorial concert (recorded shortly before the LP) to Eddie Costa, who had recently died in a car accident. Fine blues playing from Clark pleases the audience, but Hawkins' masterful rendition of *I'm Confessin'* is inspired and outstanding even by his high standards. Top-class music throughout this release from these truly great musicians.

Hugh Rainey

BEN WEBSTER LIVE IN HILVERSUM 1970

Love Is Here To Stay; Come Sunday; Raincheck; Londonderry Air (Danny Boy); Perdido; Johnny Come Lately; For Heaven's Sake; Ben's Little Scheme. (57:20)

Ben Webster (ts), Cees Slinger (p), Rob Langereis (b), John Engels (d). Hilversum. 5 September 1970.

Domino 891223

During his later years Ben Webster often played with Slinger, Engels and Langereis and is clearly very much at ease here and delivers striking performances of some standards, some Ellingtonia and a seldom-recorded original. Mostly, ballads prevail and he plays them with his usual majestic grace. There are moments when he hits a bounce tempo that is just right, such as his especially attractive interpretations of Billy Strayhorn's *Raincheck* and *Johnny Come Lately*, both with good solos from bass and drums. On Juan Tizol's *Perdido*, again with spots for bass and drums, there is no hint that by this date Webster had probably already played the song about a thousand times..

Webster's accompanists do well by the leader and while not in awe of him display respect and musical support. Throughout, Slinger has several admirable solo spots, in all of which he acquires himself well. At all times Webster demonstrates his unflagging swing and the breathy charm of his idiosyncratic sound. Only three years of his life remained at this time but he was still enjoying music and making sure that his listeners did so as well. The audience is mostly discreet and is, anyway, well off-mike; the introductions, in Dutch, are brief. This is claimed to be the first release of this material and hence should it register in the 2014 critics' poll, it will be classed as 'new'; should it do so it will not appear at all dated.

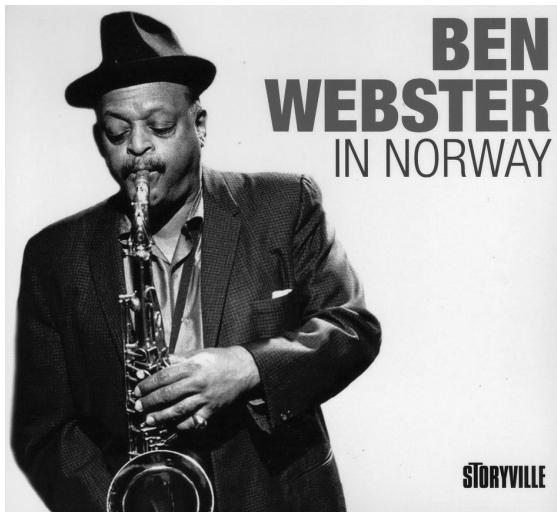
Bruce Crowther.

BEN WEBSTER IN NORWAY

In A Mellotone; How Long Has This Been Going On?; Sunday; Star Dust; Perdido; Satin Doll; I Got Rhythm; Danny Boy; The 'C' Jam Blues; Cotton Tail; My Romance (74:28)

Ben Webster (ts), Tore Sandnaes (p). Bjorn Alterhaug (b), Kjell Johansen (d). Trondheim, 17 March 1970.

Storyville 101 8433



One of the major timeless exponents of the tenor saxophone, Ben Webster lived in Europe from 1964 until his passing in 1973. Prior to this he had enjoyed a long career in the United States and had toured with Jazz At the Philharmonic in the 1950s. During his time in Europe he visited and played in Norway eight times, including this live performance before an appreciative audience at the Students' Society of the National Museum of Decorative Arts in Trondheim.

Five of the numbers played were the work of Duke Ellington with whose orchestra Ben Webster played from 1940 to 1943 and again later. The concert kicks off with a swinging *In A Mellotone* with Webster in top form despite recovering from a broken ankle. His gentle but positive rendering of ballads is realised on *How Long Has This Been Going On?* and a marvellous *Star Dust*. The local competent rhythm section swings with excellent pianist Tore Sandnaes whose playing bears hints of Oscar Peterson's style but seems slightly under recorded at times. Bassist Bjorn Alterhaug has a short solo on *Sunday*. A satisfying *Satin Doll* and an energetic *Cotton Tail* show off Webster's distinctive, rasping at times, timbre. The proceedings conclude with a short, breathy *My Romance* that is faded out after Ben's opening solo.

This is a very welcome addition to Ben Webster's recorded legacy.

Bruce Robinson

HAROLD ASHBY QUARTET WHAT AM I HERE FOR?

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 (69:17)

Harold Ashby (ts), Mulgrew Miller (p), Rufus Reid (b), Ben Riley (d)

NYC 30 November 1990

Criss 1054 CD

This CD was recorded and released long ago, but a quick on-line check reveals it is listed as available in the Criss Cross catalogue. And as I recently came by a copy and there's not that much Ashby around, a review seems justified.

Of the ten titles here, only *September In The Rain* and the lovely *Once In A While* lack Ducal associations. Four are among the most familiar Ellingtonia of all. *C Jam Blues* and Tizol's *Perdido* are 1940s warhorses and *Mood Indigo* and *Prelude* are classic songs, so the four offer plenty of variety in content and range. *What Am I Here For?* crops up less often, and its appearance here is very welcome. *I Can't Get Started* and *Frankie And Johnny* were in the band's active book at one stage or another, as was *Poinciana* during the 1944 Hurricane residency, as an early Jimmy Hamilton feature. Two performances survive from MBS broadcasts, and the 28 April one has just surfaced for the first time, on vol. 18 of Storyville's DETS Treasury Shows series. *Poinciana* is a candidate for the 'easy listening' category, but Harold's strong individuality and Mulgrew's long, flowing lines steer well wide of that trap. Harold was Jimmy's successor in the Ellington Orchestra in 1968.

The CD is by no means routine tenor-plus-trio fare. Harold's accompanists belong to a younger generation, but they adapt well to his straight-ahead and forceful approach. He in turn is stimulated by their probing support; this is a fine showcase for his wholly individual style. Mulgrew has strong Ducal connections, since he joined the Ellington Orchestra for a time after Duke's death when Mercer led it. He also joined Nils-Henning Ørsted Pedersen on a fine promotional CD for Bang & Olufsen celebrating the Ellington-Blanton duets.

Programming is well judged and timing is generous. The performances range in length from just under five minutes (*Once In A While*) to almost nine (*Poinciana*). The imaginative approach to *Mood Indigo*'s first theme, introduced in tandem by Harold and Rufus (*arco*), evokes well the unique atmosphere which always informed Duke's versions. To the extent that it celebrates Ellingtonia, the CD is by an Ellingtonian steeped in the originals from his formative years.

If your heart sinks when you see old warhorses on a track listing, don't worry. *C Jam Blues* is the only twelve-bar excursion on the disc, and everyone rides it with commitment, Mulgrew and Harold (in that order) at length, Rufus and Ben more briefly, and with a fascinating duet towards the end. *Perdido*, a boppers' favourite vehicle with strong Webster associations, is a rousing closer in which everyone is very comfortable.

If you're an Ashby enthusiast who missed this CD in the past, snap it up, and if you're new to his unique approach to the tenor saxophone, it's an excellent introduction to his music. Mark Gardner's notes are full and perceptive.

Roger Boyes

KEYNOTE COMPLETE

Fresh Sound Records, a major player in the reissues market, have released a monumental 11CD boxed set of the recordings of Harry Lim's Keynote label, 1941-47. Among its many riches is important near-Ellingtonia from 1944: the Rex Stewart Big Eight session, the Billy Taylor Big Eight session with Hodges and Carney, and, arguably, the Barney Bigard Quartets with Joe Thomas. Also from 1944, Carney turns up in the Coleman Hawkins Sax Ensemble, as does Claude Jones in Benny Morton's Trombone Choir. Finally, there are four neglected 1946 sides by a Juan Tizol group: *Keb-Lah, The Sphinx, Zanzibar, You Can't Have Your Cake And Eat It*. All four are Tizol compositions, and his band included Willie Smith, Irving Ashby, Arnold Ross, Nick Fatool and Babe Russin.

There are no alternate takes, which I'd want for the classic Lester Young sessions on CD1 and CD2, and I haven't seen the set myself. But I gather that production values are high (a 124-page booklet comes with it). Specialists in 1940s music should investigate further.

RB

NEWPORT 1958: BRUBECK PLAYS ELLINGTON

Phoenix Records continue to serve us well by reissuing Ellington and Ellington-related material like this CD of music from the 1958 Newport Jazz Festival concert at which the classic Brubeck quartet with Desmond, Gene Wright and Joe Morello played Ellingtonia. It's on Phoenix 131590, and the warhorses are leavened by two rather more out-of-the-way items, *Jump For Joy* and *Dance No 3* from the *Liberian Suite*. There's a 'bonus track', an '*A' Train*' from another 1958 concert recorded in Berlin. I imagine this was during the tour when I saw them at St. George's Hall in Bradford. What a fortunate boy I was in the late 1950s! RB

Performance

EVAN CHRISTOPHER'S DJANGO A LA CREOLE Apex, Bury St Edmunds Thursday 22 July 8pm

The band's name doesn't promise much in the way of a direct Ellington connection, and I went to their concert at the Apex, which rode of the back of their imminent appearance at the Edinburgh Jazz Festival, with no thought of writing it up for *BL*. But the performance evoked many echoes of Duke and his distinguished New Orleans clarinettist Barney Bigard, and the Maestro is a strong influence on Christopher, an exceptionally gifted clarinettist who like many of the New Orleans masters including Bigard favours the Albert system instrument.

The band's repertoire offers a decidedly modern take on the New Orleans idiom – Neo-Creole if you like – embracing the Spanish tinge, Afro-Caribbean influences and the blues, in addition to Django's music, 1920s standards and straight-ahead jazz. There were fascinating reinterpretations too of Jelly Roll Morton pieces. Not that there's anything old-timey about this group; the leader's mentor as a clarinettist was Tony Scott.

Evan's accompanists comprise Don Vappie on guitar and banjo, rhythm guitarist Dave Kelbie and French bassist Sébastien Girardot. All four are masters of their respective idioms and each is ever alert and responsive to what the others are doing; the interplay is superb, the results of the teamwork delicious. Solos are never over-long, and collectivity is always in evidence. Strong dynamic contrast adds lots of colour.

Now for the Ellingtonia. The first set included two of the five classics which resulted from the band's encounter with Django in Paris in April 1939, *I Know That You Know* and *Solid Old Man*. Evan's introduction to this legendary session was detailed and accurate; as well as being master of his music he's master of its background. The second set brought a most inventive arrangement of *The Mooche*, an *Improvisation* in the manner of the solo pieces Django offered his audiences while appearing with Duke in late 1946, and the 1960 Hodges-Webster celebration of the Maestro, *One For The Duke*.

July's *Jazz Journal* included a five-star review of a recent CD of an earlier (2012) UK live performance by *Django à la Creole*, and several CDs were on sale at the Apex. It's not easy to describe the flavour of this uniquely fresh group's idiom, but any of these discs will convey it. Better still, they're touring this country again in October, so you may be able to catch them live then.

Roger Boyes

EVENTS CALENDAR

Duke Ellington Society UK: Autumn Recital Gabriel Garrick Group

A programme of music by Duke Ellington with compositions by Michael and Gabriel Garrick
Civil Service Club
13-15 Great Scotland Yard
London
SW1A 2HJ

Saturday, 1 November, 2014, 2:30pm. Admission on the door £10.

The Jazz Repertory Company The Newport Jazz Festival: The 1950s. Tuesday, 18 November, 2014, 7:30pm Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace, London SW1X 9DQ

Buck Clayton Legacy Band Salutes Duke Ellington. Tuesday, 18 November, 2014. Doors open 7:00pm. Show time 8:00pm Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, Soho, W1D 3RW Tel: 020 7437 9595

Duke Ellington's small groups set the standard for over half a century, and this year marks the 40th anniversary of Duke Ellington's death. In this exclusive London Jazz Festival commemoration, the Buck Clayton Legacy Band celebrates Duke's small band legacy, with a set of new arrangements. Led by BBC broadcaster Alyn Shipton with musical director Matthias Seuffert, the band is described by Observer critic Dave Gelly as "a kind of living, pop-up memorial, playing concerts and festivals around Britain and Europe" and it specialises in this kind of hard-swinging mainstream music. Starring multi-award-winning Alan Barnes on reeds, along with fellow reed player Robert Fowler, and Ducal expert Martin Litton on piano, this promises to be an evening to remember.

Matthias Seuffert, reeds and Alyn Shipton, bass (co-leaders); Ian Smith, trumpet; Alan Barnes and Robert Fowler, reeds; Adrian Fry, trombone; Martin Litton, piano; Bobby Worth, drums.

Frank Griffith

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

10 October, 7.30PM. FG with Tina May and Nikki Iles. St Lukes Church, Eardley Road, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 1XT. www.stlukes-sevenoaks.org.uk

15 November, 8pm. w/Tina May and The London Jazz Sinfonia Strings and Nikki Iles, Mark Hodgson and Stephen Keogh. Pinner Parish Church.Church Lane, Pinner, Mddx, HA5 3AA. £12. www.pinnerjazz.org.uk

Provins Duke Jazz Festival:

<http://www.dukefestival.com>

Saturday, 27 September, 8:30pm, Provins CCSA. Conference: *Artistry Beyond Category* with Mercedes Ellington

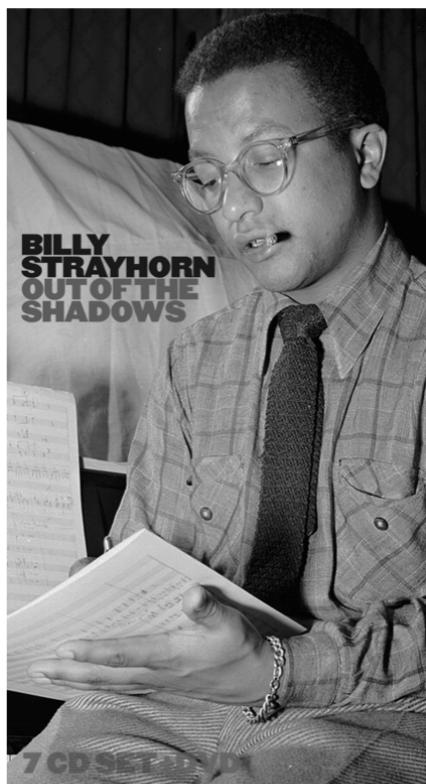
Wednesday, 1 October, 9:00pm Église de la Madeleine, Paris.

"To commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the legacy of Duke Ellington (1899-1974), La Maison du Duke urge you

to (re) discover the work of Duke, served by an exceptional ensemble: The Duke Orchestra, Mercedes Ellington (the grand daughter of Maestro in the role of the narrator), vocalists Emmanuel Pi Djeb Nicolle Rochelle and Sylvia Howard, tap dancer Fabien Ruiz (coach for Jean Dujardin for the film *The Artist*), Michael Podolak and a large choir." *(To be followed in June 2015 by a tour of French cathedrals)*

Kinda Dukish:

Thursdays, 8.30pm, British Oak, Pershore Rd., Stirchley, B'ham B30 2XS Contact Mike Fletcher on 0121 444 4129 mike@efletcher.fsworld.co.uk



STORYVILLE

BLUE LIGHTLY

Geoff Smith, Managing Editor

There was more than enough from me last time about my memories of interviewing Duke Ellington in February 1967 but there were a couple of extra points held over which I would like to share with you now.

Actor Clark Peters voiced the Ellington I met with an uncanny reality in the BBC Radio 4 play *Blood Count*, set as it was in the same year of 1967 and broadcast this April. And many of the familiar “quotes”, taken from the appropriate sources, were accurately spliced in by writer Ian Smith. Also Duke’s reply to me about the personal pride he had in *A Drum Is A Woman* was, of course, similar to replies he gave to interviewers for the rest of his days.

It is worth remembering what Ellington told Derek Jewell who had asked about the music which had given him the most satisfaction. “Of the big things, *A Drum Is A Woman* and some of my early songs. They are not big pop successes, you know, but in all of them you feel the weight of the joy” (Jewell’s *Duke*, 1977). And Columbia Records producer Irving Townsend memorably said of the work: “To the end of his life he thought of (it) as one of his supreme achievements” (*Jazz Journal*, October 1976, quoted in Nicholson).

So those readers who were not at the Amsterdam conference can now appreciate just how proud I am that I was able, with Martin Hathaway and Antony Pepper, to present the live complete performance of *Drum* by the Guildhall aggregation at the Ellington 2012 Conference at Woking.

“The weight of the joy”? Now that we have a DESUK CD of the complete piece you can say that again, Duke (and you probably did).

*

Apparently there are various contenders for the authorship of our society’s motto *Nil significat nisi pulsatur*. It is all a bit before my time, as Duke might say, but I get a bit of fun out of it by including it on my visiting card. It’s a good motto for life, don’t you agree? Once I reveal the translation to recipients it is noticeable that nearly everyone knows the statement, even if they haven’t a clue about its origin within our music. I suppose it’s a bit like “Cool” being uttered by people universally with no reference to Lester Young.

*

Bill Saxonis’ annual Ellington birthday radio “bash” (I really don’t like that word in the context of something pleasurable) on WCDB, Albany, New York State, heard worldwide on wcdbfm.com, was its usual joy.

Rarely do four hours pass so quickly as when Bill transfers his passion for Duke to the airwaves.

This time, Saturday 26 April, Bill aired again part of our Dave Brubeck “kitchen tapes” interview with Darius about how in awe Dave was on his first meeting with Duke. Bill linked this with some of the extensive interview he had with author Terry Teachout about his new biography. Teachout spoke to Bill of the “huge, huge” personality of Duke, talked about him being a very private person, and how “he didn’t tell anybody anything”.

This was his response in part to being asked to go back in time and imagine meeting Duke. He did not think he would have got very far with him personally but, tellingly, as he concludes in his book, “the truth comes out in the music”.

Also on Terry Teachout’s *Duke*, Ellington chronological compiler David Palmquist said on duke-lym: “I admire all the (Ellington) biographers who have given it a shot, especially those who have taken the time to document their sources. It doesn’t matter whether we like what they write, authors are entitled to express opinions – but sources for factual information should be cited so readers can consider their reliability.”

I agree completely.

*

Takes one to know one, I suppose, but pianist Marion McPartland really brought *The Clothèd Woman* to life for me in a Maybeck Hall piano recital version (Concord) played by Bill on his show. Here was passion, here was swing, here was commitment to Duke. And here was *herself*...

Thinking of the “clothed” inference, total exposure of the artist is a consequence of solo recitals, if she or he is any good. Duke himself, and Michel Petrucciani are extrovert examples of what I mean, with Bill Evans’ more introverted exposure always apparent. Marion here is a bit of both.

I read in *The Penguin Guide to Jazz* (Cook, Morton) that she startled Ellington himself with her take on *The Clothèd Woman*. Well I never.

*

Can you relate to this? As a souvenir of attending an Aki Takase recital, go ahead, and we can all relate of course to an all-Duke piano recital by an accomplished musician. But may be just the once... The question is, do you want to have *Aki Takase: My Ellington* (Intakt CD 213) in your record collection, presuming you like to play your discs again and again?

Aki is a virile, attacking pianist, quite mesmerising I am sure to hear in the flesh. The but that now comes in

is that there is a touch too much weird probing and self-indulgence on show to make it suitable for wholehearted recommendation.

Take any of the intros. Ellington had a point with his as he cued in the orchestra or summoned the musicians from the wings; he did not mess about. Some serious editing of meandering intros here would have improved things a lot. And the structure of Aki's interpretations would have remained in place, even been enhanced.

That said, there are some intriguing versions here when she settles into the groove of such as *A Little Max (Parfait)* and *In A Mellow Tone/Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me...* But with *The Mooche* and *Love You Madly* among most others those intros and time changes let them and her down and really do not bear much repetition by the listener. Her tour de force workout on *Caravan* is full of energy and fury but does not stand comparison with Michel Petrucciani's extended version, which she mimics.

She is a formidable artist and technician playing a beautiful instrument, and with the touch and sound perfectly captured. Credit is due to her for her contribution, but it is very much her Ellington, as the title suggests. It swings in part.

*

Don't blame me for what follows... The Smith household has expanded by virtue of one cat. Being a rescue cat from Cats Protection, he was already named. So say hello to Cotton. Yes, he is white but it is still a rubbish name. Or is it?

I immediately thought of the Cotton Club and various titles related thereto but it took Antony Pepper to state the obvious, *Cotton Tail*. So that's now the name in full. Having ascertained the chap does indeed have a rather splendid tail, Antony insisted I record his arrival in this column and Editor Ian Bradley concurred. So there you have it. Are there any other Ellington-savvy pets out there? They had better be good to compete with our jumpin' hepcat.

*

I recently bought some 1927-39 Ellingtons and I am exceptionally excited. The music was completely familiar to me but the music is on vinyl, on three near-pristine 12 inch LPs with what I consider to be beautiful cover artwork plus full annotation and heartfelt essays (Irving Mills, Leonard Feather) and helpful sleeve notes (Stanley Dance).

You may have guessed I am referring to *The Ellington Era* compilation, my set of which is now satisfactorily complete, 96 timeless and quite wonderful

tracks proudly presented – and that is the point – over six LPs within two volumes of three.

These were issued in Britain in the then new CBS imprint in 1963 (Volume One) and in 1966 (Volume Two). The earlier volume was presented on three single LPs and went quickly out-of-print. The second volume was in a plush box and it was that which I bought at the time.

It has taken me all these decades to complete the set by at last acquiring the three separate Vol 1 LPs. Of course, every note of the music is already on my shelves on CD and much of it also on LP. But to have it now on this set gives me a warm feeling of satisfaction and I am telling everyone about it. Does it make any sense at all?

Oh, I almost forgot – the music on these LPs simply sounds better.



*

Commenting on a new biography of poet and idiosyncratic jazz fan Philip Larkin, a newspaper columnist said he was struck by how much knowledge of great writers comes from their letters - and asks how biographers in the future will be able to cope now that no one writes personal letters any more.

Tell that to the Duke brigade. The columnist mentions relying on the subject's personal pronouncements (different from true opinions?), recollections of friends (biased in favour?), and recollections of rivals (biased against?).

Sounds familiar?

**MINUTES of the DESUK Committee Meeting
1pm on SATURDAY 5th APRIL 2014 at the
Punch Tavern, 99 Fleet Street, London, EC4Y 1DE**

Present: Peter Caswell (Chair), Chris Addison, Ian Bradley, Quentin Bryar, Catherine Coates, Victor Lawrence, Phil Mead, Antony Pepper, Geoff Smith

1. Chairman's opening remarks (PC). Chairman welcomed members, particularly IB and CA who had been unable to make the previous meeting.

2. Apologies: Frank Harvey had sent his apologies.

3. Draft Minutes of 18th January 2014. The draft Minutes had already been circulated. These were approved and there were no matters arising.

4. Officers' Reports.

a. Treasurer's Report (VL). Treasurer spoke to his report which had already been circulated. He amplified certain details and in particular the need to increase income. PC recommended that the report be accepted and this was agreed. Issues raised by GS would be discussed under a later agenda item. **Membership Secretary's Report (VL).** Again, this report had been previously circulated. We might be down in membership numbers again, because of lapsed payments. A number of annual memberships were yet to be renewed, despite reminders. GS congratulated VL on his report and also on the flyer he had sent out last year. VL has also produced an updated membership application form, which was greeted with approval. A proposal from GS that 200 of these forms be taken to Amsterdam was agreed.

b. Blue Light Editor (IB). The BL report had been issued beforehand. PC congratulated IB on his stewardship. VL confirmed membership joiners received the full complement of BL issues for the year of joining. A lengthy discussion on collation and distribution of BL remainder copies ensued. AP proposed the entire matter be an item for the July agenda. This was agreed and PC asked everyone to think about it and exchange emails on the subject. PC drew attention to the list in the BL report of CDs for review and volunteers were requested to liaise with IB on this.

c. Vice Chair's Report. GS had items for discussion later (see item 5) but otherwise there was nothing to report.

d. Publicity (CA). CA presented a comprehensive report on his activities. Responses from jazz education institutions in general had been disappointing but he would approach again in the hope of a more favourable outcome. Jazz societies had provided four positive responses - RB may be going to Ulverston (one which did respond) to give a recital. A number of dance band/orchestras had resulted in some good responses, including Tony Shepherd. Jazz radio was looking quite favourable, with John Hellings of BBC Radios Shropshire, Stoke and Hereford & Worcester interested in doing a piece on DESUK. It is proposed to record in London with Hellings interviewing Roger Boyes. RB is prepared to do this, with committee approval. This was immediately approved. VL suggested some of these

could be advertised on the Events page of the website. IB suggested Catherine Tackley (who is speaking at Amsterdam) could be a useful educational contact.

e. Meetings Organiser/Website (AP). London meetings continue, RB is doing a presentation in the autumn. The Guildhall project is set for 3rd May with still possibly a repeat on the 11th. PC congratulated AP on organising the project. However, to the suggestion of an event at Pizza Express in the autumn, PC requested AP to hold off on this until the success (or otherwise) in attendance terms of the Guildhall event could be assessed. Lastly, AP reported that the website is up to date with information on both the 3rd May event and the AGM.

5. Vice Chair's item. GS reported that the *Drum Is A Woman* CDs for DESUK were now available and include the printed A4 sheet original Woking concert programme as an insert. The committee agreed the selling prices as £8 (£10 including postage) or optionally €10 for purchasers at the Amsterdam Conference.

6. Arrangements for the AGM. PC reminded committee to submit their reports for co-ordination before Amsterdam. *The deadline for the reports is 20th April.*

7. A.O.B.

a. Annual Subscriptions. It was recognised that the annual subscription had not been raised for some considerable time and it was now necessary, as recommended by the Treasurer, to increase this. It was agreed that an increase of £5 p.a. would be recommended to the AGM for approval, to take effect from 1st January 2015. This would mean an annual subscription of £25 from that date.

b. Constitution. Under item 9, on a majority vote, it was agreed that no change on the issue of quorum would be made to the Constitution. Under item 8, In a bid to reduce travel expenses, GS proposed a reduction in the number of committee meetings per year from 4 to 3 or, alternatively, from 4 to 2 (not including the AGM). The proposed reduction was first approved on a show of hands. A vote on the options was then taken. A reduction of meetings from 4 to 3 was approved for recommendation to the AGM. GS also proposed a reduction in the number of committee members; this was held over for discussion at the July committee meeting.

c. Miscellaneous: (1)Nowak CD. This CD, which had been sent to the DESUK secretary, was displayed to the committee and left with AP for consideration of a possible review. (2)Press Release from Damian Zak. It was agreed no action was needed on this.

8. Dates and venues for future meetings.

- a. AGM – 10/11am SUNDAY 18th MAY 2014,
Conservatory of Amsterdam
- b. Saturday 19th July 2014 - 1pm Punch Tavern

There being no further business the meeting was declared closed at 3.02 pm.

Catherine Coates (Secretary)
9th April 2014

Approved 19th July 2014

