

THE DUKE ELLINGTON SOCIETY, CHAPTER 90

P.O. BOX 15591 . WASHINGTON, D.C. 20003-0787

N E W S L E T T E R

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Theodore A. Shell, President
202-363-2446
Angela Grimmer, Secretary
202-546-7764

Theodore R. Hudson, Vice President
301-585-9204
Jack Towers, Treasurer
301-570-4236

Theodore R. Hudson, *Newsletter* Editor

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G. Leo Hunt, 1919-1996

Friends crowded St. Peter Claver Church in downtown Baltimore on March 16 for the "Homegoing Service" for Leo Hunt, long-time Chapter member and a familiar figure at annual international Ellington Study Group conferences. The ceremony was markedly uplifting, appropriate for Leo, so beloved and admired for his indomitable spirit, enthusiasm, and stamina in spite of a physical challenge. He died on March 12 after a short illness.

From childhood, Leo had infantile paralysis resulting from polio. Undaunted, he went through college and had a satisfying and varied career as accountant, insurance underwriter, and administrator in the city government. All the while, he enjoyed a rewarding, rich personal life.

Knowing the problems of the physically challenged, Leo, a lifelong resident of Baltimore, served on the Mayor's Commission for Disability, helping to assure for them equal access to public facilities and transportation. At the funeral, close friend and fellow-Chapter 90 member Ed Powell read a proclamation signed by the mayor in recognition of Leo's many services to the city of Baltimore.

Leo's interest in music was inclusive. He was a founding member of the Interracial Jazz Society, which was instrumental in breaking down racial barriers, and he was a long-time member of the Left Bank Jazz Society. He is best known to us as a valued friend and member the "Baltimore contingent" of our Chapter. Recently he was not as regular in attendance as he wanted to be, but we recall how delighted we were that he made a surprise appearance at Ted Shell's when the Chapter hosted Sjef and Milia Hoefsmit, who were visiting in the area on their way to the annual conference in Pittsburg. He had made plans to attend our annual holiday party in January, but the "Blizzard of '96" prevented him.

Leo loved the music, the presentations, and the fellowship at the annual conferences. His

Experience Harry Carney's Deified Tone at Our May 4 Meeting

Ben Pubols notes, "In a 1993 *New Yorker* article, Whitney Balliett described Carney's low register as the Voice of God . . ." So, Ben's program at our next meeting, **Saturday, May 4, at 8:30 pm sharp**, will be titled "The Voice of God." He will include more than just low register—in fact, not only the baritone sax, but also Carney's alto sax, clarinet and bass clarinet contributions as well as important section work.

Ben and Lillian will host the meeting at their home, **3302 Shepherd Street, Chevy Chase, MD.** (Directions are enclosed on a separate sheet.)

Let's hear the musical word on May 4!

Don't Miss These Birthmonth Events --

- ▶ *Ellington Art Show* by student artists from area schools at the Smithsonian's Museum of American History, **April 24-May 26**
- ▶ *Duke Ellington Youth Project Festival* at the Smithsonian's Museum of American History on the evening of **Friday, April 26**
- ▶ "*Skilipooping for Duke*" by Patricia Willard and Reuben Jackson at *Borders*, 18th and K Streets, NW on **Monday, April 29 at 7 pm**

sister, Jackie Howard, says that a few days before his death, he was making plans to attend "Ellington '96" in Toronto.

At the time of Billy Strayhorn's death, Duke Ellington cited four "freedoms" possessed by Billy. One in particular assuredly applies as well to Leo Hunt, "freedom from self-pity."

We will deeply miss our beloved Leo, and we extend to his family and loved ones our condolences. We have been enriched by his presence and example.

Duke Ellington En Concert Avec Europe 1 (RTE 710707)

Reviewed by Ted Shell

This two-CD version was sent from our member Sjef Hoefsmits in Europe and passed on to me for review. I have a concert on this label done at the theater Des Champs Elysees in Paris on the 29th and 30th of January 1965. The concert Sjef sent was recorded on October 29, 1958 at the Alhambra in Paris.

The concert opens with the usual "Take the 'A' Train," and as in all of Duke's concerts, the master is the announcer. The audience is introduced to a mini-medley of "The Black and Tan Fantasy," "Creole Love Call," and "The Mooche," with beautiful solos by Ray Nance, Russell Procope and Ray Nance. We recently honored Ray with a members' choice meeting, and he is featured throughout this concert with his singing, trumpeting and violin virtuosity. On "Newport Up," this upbeat rendition features a virtuoso performance by Clark Terry and some pyrotechnics by Paul Gonsalves. Then a battle royal by the horns ensues. There is next a beautiful arrangement of "Deep Purple" by Billy Strayhorn executed by Jimmy Hamilton on clarinet. There follows a version of "Harlem Airshaft" with an outstanding solo by Clark Terry. Harry Carney does his usual performance on "Sophisticated Lady." The first disk ends with Johnny Hodges in his usual mellifluosity on "Jeep's Blues," "All of Me" and "Things Ain't." The second disk begins with an interesting "quatralogue" of four trumpets—Clark Terry, Cat Anderson, Ray Nance, and Shorty Baker—on the up-tempo "El Gato." For those who enjoy drum solos, there is a "Hi Fi Fo-Fums," an extended solo by Sam Woodyard. An 18-minute version of the Ellington medley follows with no holds barred. This version is enhanced by Nance's scat-singing ability. The concert ends with a 12-minute version of "Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue," fondly reminiscent of the band's triumph at Newport in '56. This rendition is quite different from other versions, and what a way to end a concert.

These disks are a must for one's collection.

Ed. note: In connection with this CD, Sjef writes of the Alhambra concert and one the night before:

"These concerts are very dear to me On my way by train to Switzerland, I stayed overnight in Paris on the 28th and I was surprised to see that Duke played the Palais de Chaillot. I arrived just before Jimmy Hamilton started to play 'Tenderly.'

"I saw that Duke would play in the Alhambra the next day and I arranged to be back from Switzerland the next evening and to stay in Paris again for that concert. The only thing I do not remember is whether there were one or two concerts each evening. Now we know there were two on both dates. I am sure that I was in both cases [at] the second concert. I would definitely have stayed for the second [had I been at] the first. The CDs contains . . . the correct sequence [of] the complete second concert of the 29th."

So That Was Steve Bugg on Bass

From downloaded copy courtesy of Peter MacHare

The following is excerpted from an item that appeared last fall on the duke-lym [love you madly] internet site, from "<HUGHESD@JSC.MIL>":

I was driving into Rolla [Missouri] from the west on Saturday morning, 17 March 1962 with my mother. We were going to view the parade [on St. Patrick's day]. I saw the Ellington bus pull into The Skillet Cafe on the north side of US 66 there with all those motels and gas stations. It is still there on I-44 today, and many of you Ellington chat list folks have driven by it.

I asked Mom, "Want breakfast with the Ellington Band?" We did. That was 33½ years ago, so I don't remember much of it other than the Duke was dressed to the "nines" with a full-length black cape. I also remember that Paul Gonsalves looked like "death warmed over." Most of the guys were smoking. They had either driven all night, or had gotten up early to arrive in Rolla from a performance the night before at nearby Ft. Wood.

The bass player was sick or missing, so Steve Bugg from our college [an engineering school in Rolla] band played the dance that night for him. Steve didn't miss a note! He works as an engineer for Anheiser Busch in St. Louis. I called his home recently to let him know of this chat list and found he was on a business trip. I gave the info to his wife. He had never even told her the story or that he was a super bass player in college. Steve was always quiet and unassuming. Hopefully, Steve will get on here and tell about his night playing bass with the Ellington band.

Ellington Live—In the Schools

Contributed by Luvenia A. George

A component of the Duke Ellington Youth Project this year has been performances of the Ellington School of the Arts Jazz Band in four public schools. Under the direction of Davey Yarborough, the band demonstrates Ellington's signature orchestrating techniques—such as the use of the plunger mute and the unique voicing of instruments—to auditoriums of wide-eyed, curious students.

Yarborough employs a format that has his young band members giving brief lecture-demonstrations while he fields question and answer periods with the audience. One of the best in the country, the Ellington School of the Arts Jazz Band plays a repertoire that ranges from early Ellington to the later standards, and leaves the audience literally shouting for more!

Concerts are being held at Fletcher-Johnson Education Center, Shaw and Douglass Junior High Schools, and Coolidge High.

The Program in African American Culture was fortunate to afford our youth the excitement of Ellington's music coming to vibrant life, sowing the seeds of musical appreciation as the legacy continues.

Ed. note: Luvenia forgot to say that she is Co-ordinator of the Duke Ellington Youth Project.

Benny Åsland Improved, Back Home

A recent item in the Duke Ellington Swedish Society *Bulletin* informs us that Benny Åsland was released from the hospital in February and intends to resume work on the DEMS bulletin soon. Best wishes for steady recovery, Benny!

Researcher Seeks Help on Ivie Project

In preparation for an Aesthetic Realism seminar, I am studying the life of Ivie Anderson who sang with Duke Ellington's orchestra from 1931-42, and would be grateful to learn of interviews, letters, articles in which she speaks about her life and her art. Shirley Jones, 200 East 5th St., #10L, New York, NY, (202) 982-1181.

Quotation of the Month

Contributed by Annie Kuebler

Anything that starts with Ellington ends with an assassination attempt on the Fuhrer!

-- from *Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany* by Michael H. Kater

Patricia and Reuben Will Skillipoop for Duke on His Birthdate

In celebration of Ellington's birthdate on April 29, Patricia Willard and Reuben Jackson will present a special program at the Borders book store at 18th and K Streets, NW, at 7 pm.

Titled "Skillipooping for Duke: A Celebration of the Humor of Ellington on the 97th Anniversary of His Birth in Washington, DC," their presentation will be on comedic aspects of Duke's life and personality. Knowing Patricia's and Reuben's propensity for fun ☺, their conversation will surely be a delight.

The event is free and open to the public.

Former Ellingtonian Yvonne To Perform at "Ellington '96"

Native Washingtonian Yvonne (then Lanauze) Duke, who sang with Ellington in the early 1950s, will appear with the Archie Alleyne group at "Ellington '96" in Toronto. This will be her first appearance at the annual conferences.

Having long made her home in Canada, Yvonne, using her maiden name Smith as surname, still performs as vocalist and pianist. Duke did not attempt the Lanauze, introducing her in performance and identifying her on records simply as Yvonne.

Washington area Ellington enthusiasts who knew her back when will be happy to reminisce with her at the conference, for she has very warm feelings about her home town and long-time friends.

Big Money Then (and Now)

The Smithsonian recently acquired Frank Schiffman Apollo Theater materials. Schiffman managed that institution for a number of years, eventually became part-owner. Among the memorabilia is a carbon copy of a typescript of weekly net pay for performers during 1934.

According to this record—of course, we are not sure if this document is accurate and official—Duke was paid \$4,000 for the week beginning December 7, the highest that year. By contrast, this record indicates, Benny Carter, who played the theater's first ever show, netted \$800 for the week beginning January 26; later, Chick Webb made \$750; Jimmie Lunceford, \$1,750. Closest to Ellington was the Mills Brothers at \$2,250.

"Dramatis Felidae"

(To Use Our Man's Term in MIMM)

Among persons cited in the liner notes for assistance in the production of *Passion Flower*, an all-Billy Strayhorn CD, is our **Walter van de Leur**. ♪ ♪ ♪ Busy guy **Walter** also reconstructed unreleased compositions from the *Assault on a Queen* film score, which will be performed at DEJS' Ellington Birthday Anniversary Concert on May 4, conducted by David Berger. ♪ ♪ ♪ **Alexandre Rado** will present "Johnny Hodges: The Musician and the Man" at the Toronto conference in June. ♪ ♪ ♪ **Jack Dennis** and daughter **JoAnn** and **Geneva** and **Ted Hudson** attended the funeral of Leo Hunt in Baltimore.

Ellington-Strayhorn Music Live!

- Cleo Laine and John Dankworth delighted the audience with several Ellington-Strayhorn pieces at one of the Air Force Band's Guest Artists Series at Constitution Hall.
- The National Symphony Orchestra's rendition of *The River* at the Kennedy Center in March heightened appreciation of the nuances and dynamics of this seldom heard composition.

Ellington-Strayhorn in Print:

An interesting article, "The Music Duke Played," by Ted Chandler appears in *Tailgate Ramblings*, February 1996. In mentioning some notable recordings, the article thanks Jack Towers for the famed Fargo recording. It concludes:
...The great preponderance of the music played by Ellington was Ellingtonian and a remarkable amount of the non-Ellingtonian stuff sounded, by the time the band got through with it, completely homegrown.

Well, maybe not Wham Rebop Boom Bam.

Chapter Chairpersons/Coordinators

Amenities	Helen Frazier
"Ellington '99" (Pro Tem)	Ben Pubols & Bob Reny
Membership	Angela & Mac Grimmer
Nominating	Jack Dennis, Bill Flemmons, & another/others t.b.a.
Program	Mac Grimmer

These "first chair" leaders will welcome your suggestions and active involvement.

An Eye- and Ear-Opening Evening

Reported by Angela Grimmer, Secretary

Annie Kuebler planned and coordinated a superb evening at the Smithsonian Archives Center for the April meeting of the Duke Ellington Society. Many of the rare photos have now been organized into albums, which we were able to view, as well as the original scrapbooks that chronicled Duke's career. Ted Hudson played rare audio tapes from the collection, the highlight of which was a long solo by Money Johnson at the Rainbow Room. Ben Pubols presented video selections, including the clip of the *Perfume Suite* with the George Pal Puppets. Of special delight to the members were the many original music manuscripts in both Duke's and Billy's handwriting on display for our perusal. And the refreshments were especially tasty! All in all, a perfect evening.

The meeting-reception for us was the idea of John Fleckner, Director of the Archives Center (his wife, Laura, helped set up the refreshments). Also on hand, having helped in the preparation of the exhibit, was Chapter member Scott Schwartz, one of the Ellington Collection archivists, who was assisting in the background.

Thank you, John, Annie, and the rest of the Ellington Collection staff.

Calendar

- April 24-May 26** - Students' Ellington Art Show, Smithsonian's National Museum of American History
- Friday, April 26** - Duke Ellington Youth Festival, Smithsonian's National Museum of American History
- Monday, April 29** - "Skillipooping for Duke" by Patricia Willard and Reuben Jackson, 7 p.m., Borders Books, 18th & K Sts., NW
- Saturday, May 4** - Monthly Meeting: Ben and Lillian Pubols' Home
- TBA** - Monthly Meeting: Program by Jack Towers
- June 19-23** - "Ellington '96," Toronto

As You Did Last Year, Do
 Something Creative On
April 29

