

# Ellingtonia



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## **Ellington Instrumentalists Cook and Woodman Die**

Willie Cook, whom Duke described in *MIMM* as “potentially the best first trumpet player in the business,” passed in Stockholm on September 22. His health declining, he had moved into a hospice. On October 13, Britt Woodman, the trombonist whose musical conception and technical virtuosity were acclaimed, died in California from respiratory problems.

Cook joined the Ellington band in 1951, replacing Shorty Baker, and remained, with occasional departures, into the late 1960s. He had extensive experience, having worked with the likes of McShann, B.B. King, Hines, Gerald Wilson, Basie, and Gillespie. In later years, he made his home in Sweden and played with a number of groups in Europe. Twice he performed at Ellington Study Group Conferences in Europe.

Woodman also had performed at several of the Conferences, the last being in Chicago in 1998. He joined the Ellington orchestra as Lawrence Brown’s first-chair replacement in 1951 and stayed as a regular for about a decade. While his tenure with Ellington may be considered the high point of his career, it also included playing with Mingus, Gillespie, Goodman, Benny Carter, and other luminaries.

Both Woodman and Cook may be heard to advance on a number of recordings during their tenures with the band.

The world of music is diminished by the deaths of these two masters.

## **By-Laws Changes Considered**

A change in the term of officers from the July-June fiscal year to the calendar year is the major proposal in a report by the Constitution and By-Laws Revision Committee at our last meeting. In keeping with our present by-laws, the recommended changes will be open for discussion at our November meeting and voted on at the following meeting. In this connection, the Committee also recommended a change by which amendments could be effected in two meetings, rather than the presently required three. Other recommended changes are essentially stenographic.

## **Floorshow**

### **At November Meeting !**

by Mac Grimmer & Peter MacHare, Program Coordinators

We are going to have a Floorshow for our program on November 4, which means, of course, that the featured artist will be Ray Nance, who earned the nickname “Floorshow” because of his many talents — trumpeter, cornetist, violinist, vocalist, and dancer. He played in the Ellington orchestra from 1940 to 1963.

Ray was a fun-loving individual who could pack more humor into five minutes of music than many artists managed to do in their entire careers. Presenter Peter MacHare promises an enjoyable evening for all.

It will all happen at our regular monthly meeting at **8 pm, Saturday, November 4, at Grace Lutheran Church, 16th and Varnum Streets, NW.** See you there!

## **The First Are . . .**

Our first member to renew for 2001 is James E. Lewis; second is Janet M. Brenner. For the first first-time-ever membership we declare a tie: William and Martha Hunter, Joseph and Olivia McMillan, and Joan H. Mooney. Confused about dates of mail vs. hand delivery, we aren’t sure who was actually first. For the past several years the first renewal was by David Fleming of England, but his local agent—who shall be allowed to shamefacedly remain anonymous— was derelict in duty, causing David to be third in this category. Be cautioned by this object lesson of miscreancy and get your dues in now.

## **Youth Project To Expand Horizon**

Approximately 60 teachers involved this academic year in the Duke Ellington Youth Project will participate in an opening workshop in November. David Baker, director of the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra, will be a special guest.

While Ellington will remain the Project’s principal focus, it will expand to embrace other figures in jazz. While it has been a humanities centered initiative, this year science and mathematics teachers will be invited to be a part of the Project.

## **Jazz: The First Century** edited by John Edward Hasse

New York: William Morrow, 2000. 240 pages. \$40.

*Reviewed by Frank Turner*

This excellent work is the *Guide Michelin* and the *Oxford Dictionary* for all who love jazz, all who would have an interest, and those who have just become aware of this wonderful art form.

*Jazz: The First Century* surveys about all there is to jazz in the last century. The extremely thoroughly done research reveals all sorts of information coupled with great photographs of musicians and musical materials worthy of museums. The explanations of the beginnings of jazz and its growth out from New Orleans are comprehensive and balanced.

John Edward Hasse deserves credit for a massive editing effort. He did much more than just that though; he assembled materials from myriad sources and fitted those many pieces together in this splendid volume. Much of the text is from his pen and where many authors and "editors" rely on footnotes and bibliography, that often tedious practice is avoided by Dr. Hasse's including source articles that chronologically address the development of jazz. Among them are credited articles by leading music aficionados whose articles one couldn't wait to read in the latest *DownBeat*.

This writing is all-inclusive; it seems as if every facet of music lore in the massive realm of jazz is treated here, beginning in New Orleans and ending with the current revival of Swing. It is noticeable that from the years of World War I and even to today the works of Duke Ellington and the adaptations of them run like a laser through *Jazz*.

This is the book to have if your library has room for just one on jazz. If there is more room I strongly suggest that you by all means buy it and you will never need to buy another on twentieth-century jazz.

## **Jungle Nights & Soda Fountain Rags:**

### **Poem for Duke Ellington & the Duke Ellington Orchestra Members** by Brian Gilmore

Hyattsville, MD: Karibu Books, 1999. 108 pages. \$12.

*Reviewed by Marjorie F. Hooper*

Brian Gilmore chose to entitle this dramatic tribute to the everlasting genius of Duke Ellington *Jungle Nights & Soda Fountain Rags*. Conceived as an extended poem in praise for Duke's intriguing biography, fantastic canon, and eclectic band of musicians, this slender volume is a tone poem to delight many a reader with its style and novel arrangements.

Gilmore uses seven "suites" to present the voluminous details of Duke's existence, beginning with the birthplace of "the boy who painted," Ward Place, NW, Washington, DC. Employing lower case letters throughout the verses for all persons, places, and first words of each line, he covers in one hundred and seven pages this genius' historic journey through life.

Duke's rise to success, his male and female musical associates, his incredible orchestral stars who basked in and contributed to his genius, and an unparallel range of eternally beautiful selections are adroitly woven in pithy lines that are encyclopedic in detail. Even the history of slavery, the deliciousness of soul food, and the lure of eighty-eights, not to speak of the race's eternal quest for freedom, are made meaningful in short lines.

"such sweet thunder" this is: an apt description of this extended poetic song. "what can we ever say / that will be enough," Gilmore ponders.

[*Ed. note: This book may be obtained at Karibu Books in Prince Georges Plaza or by phone at 301-559-1140, ext. 13, and by e-mail at <karibu.com>. It may be obtained directly for \$14, including postage, from author Brian Gilmore, 7103 - 14th Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912, 301-445-7271.*]

## **Jazz in American Culture** by Peter Townsend

Jackson: University Press of Mississippi and Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000. 193 pages. \$18 in USA.

*Reviewed by Theodore R. Hudson*

Professor Townsend announces in its Preface that this book "is partly directed to an audience of students of American Studies and American Literature, who may not be conversant with jazz, but it is hoped that it also presents a distinctive view of jazz that will be of interest of those who are already well versed in it." Appropriately titled, the study is structured in two main parts, "Jazz" and "Culture." While not professing to define jazz, he contends that its "stable elements" as a music are improvisation, rhythm, repertoire, and instrumental sound and technique. Within each, there are variations that encourage individuality (remindful of Duke's "beyond category" dictum). Jazz has had a culture chronology all its own, he shows; that has been different in different situations, for example, the "jam-session culture" that diminished as commercial big-band culture evolved.

Essentially, this is a book about of jazz as reflected, refracted, and integrated in twentieth-century life. As specifically related to other arts, Townsend discusses "jazz as aesthetic model" in, for instance, literature (Kerouac, Morrison, Welty, et al) and visual arts (Aaron Douglass, Jackson Pollack, et al). In his closing, the author writes that ". . . jazz is a discourse on itself. It does not stand in real need of any of the discourses of art, literature, analysis or myth. None of these alternate languages contains the past of jazz, its future, its depth and its power."

Certainly *Jazz in American Culture* is an important study, well researched and thoughtful. It is a major contribution to contemporary discourse on jazz, for it illuminates the *significance* of jazz beyond any intra-culture of time and place.

## Short Sheets . . .

♫ ♫ In connection with its "On Time" exhibit, Reuben Jackson spoke at the Smithsonian on Ellington's conception of time. ♫ ♫ While on Smithsonian business, Annie Kuebler had the opportunity to stop in on the "Way Out West" convention in California that featured an impressive array of panelists and bands, including several that played at Ellington 2000. ♫ ♫ The Ellington-Shakespeare derived musical *Play On* will begin a run at the Arena Stage in November.

## Centennial CD Receives New Publicity; Number of Sources Increases

by Ben Pubols

Rob Bamberger, during his "Hot Jazz Saturday Night" program of September 30, played several selections from our Centennial CD, *The Duke in Washington*, and gave it a very nice on-air recommendation. He played the three selections recorded at the Bainbridge Naval Training Center in 1944, "G.I. Jive," "Amor Amor," and "Frankie and Johnny." He also gave full details on ordering through our post office box address. Rob's program, which concentrates mainly on jazz and popular music of the 1920s through the early 1950s, is heard on WAMU-FM (88.5) every Saturday night from seven until ten pm. The program is highly recommended.

This original, special CD and its jacket expressly produced for our centennial celebration of Duke's birth is becoming a collector's item.

In addition to being available locally from Olsson's Books and Records for the past year, *The Duke in Washington* is listed, complete with a reproduction of the cover, in the current catalogue of the California-based jazz CD outlet, Worlds Records. They can be contacted at < <http://www.worldsrecords.com> >.

[Ed. note: We thank Ben for his initiative and continuing efforts to make remaining copies of this souvenir CD available to those who have not had an opportunity to get one.]

## TDES Plans One-Day Conference

On Saturday, November 4, 9:30 am to 4 pm, TDES will hold its Second Annual Conference, at St. Peter's Church, 54th and Lexington Ave., New York City.

The program will consist of five sessions: "The Literary Ellington" by Brent Hayes Edwards, "The Real Ambassadors: Duke Ellington's State Department Tours" by Penny von Eschen, "Side by Side: Encounters with the Duke" by Tom Harris, "English Bands Playing Ellington" by Dennis Dimmer, and "Barnet and Ellington: A Listening Session" by Richard Ehrenzeller.

For more information, contact TDES at Box 31 Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008-0031 or via the internet at < [www.duke.fuse.net](http://www.duke.fuse.net) >.

## Well Deserved Praise!

The amount of time, energy, expertise, quiet enthusiasm—selflessly and at personal expense—that Sjef Hoefsmit applies to Ellingtonian research and enjoyment by others is simply astounding. Most noticeable are the peerless *DEMS Bulletin* and Azure cassettes, as well as his learned contributions to the < Duke-LYM > web site. From the *Bulletin*, we reprint this open letter from Peter Tanner of England: *Dear Sjef,*

*I do feel that it is high time that someone paid tribute to your year after year presentation of an excellent and interesting cassette of often rare Duke Ellington performances to everyone who attends the annual Duke Ellington International Conference and usually another one at Christmas. So let me be the one via DEMS to do it on behalf of all of us.*

*It is not only a very generous gesture but it also entails a considerable amount of work and investigation on your part, not to mention the copying and supplying of the cassettes.*

*So thank you Sjef on behalf of every one of us. We DO love you madly!*

*Yours, Peter Tanner.*

## CD Celebrates Fargo's 60th Anniversary

The forthcoming new release of the performance of the Ellington orchestra recorded by Dick Burris and our Jack Towers on November 8, 1940 in Fargo, ND promises to be superb in terms of sound quality and accompanying booklet. First of all, Jack Towers himself re-mastered the original recordings, and as Lee Farley wrote recently in the *DEMS Bulletin*, "Anyone who has heard the originals played by Jack at any of several of the early Ellington study group conferences knows that they have tremendous presence." There will be essays by Jack, who describes the experience of recording the dance (closing with his typical modesty, "We had no idea that people all over the world would be listening to it 60 years later"), and by William Strother, who caught the band the next night in Duluth, MN. Also, the issue will include a reprint of a 1976 piece by Jerry Valburn. In a carefully researched, footnoted, and gracefully written major article, Annie Kuebler provides valuable background material and analyses of the individual pieces played that night. Photographs by Jack and other illustrations enhance the booklet.

## Correction

In our last issue, in reporting George Avakian's talk at Ellington 2000, we wrote that Patricia Willard discovered at the Library of Congress the Voice of America's recording of Paul Gonsalves' "Diminuendo and Crescendo" solo at Newport, which was presumed lost. We thank Patricia for informing us that it was not she but rather Library staffer Larry Appelbaum who deserves credit for the discovery.

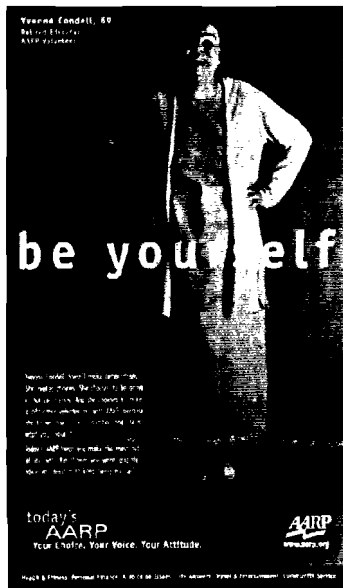
## "Dramatis Felidae" (To Use Our Man's Term in *MIMM*)

### About Our Members

♫ ♫ **Don Rouse** has taken a "sabbatical" from editing *Tailgate Ramblings*. Er, ah—Just to keep your writing chops in shape, Don, how about an occasional piece for *Ellingtonia*? ♫ ♫ We send get well wishes to **Bill Hill**, who has suffered a set-back, we hope of very short duration, in his recuperation from surgery. ♫ ♫ "Beyond Category": A Musical Actuation" was **Ted Hudson's** topic for a presentation to The Listening Group last month. **Tex Gathings** "had his back" before this audience of experts, among them **Bill Hasson**, and helped greatly by contributing examples and commentary during Ted's demonstration. ♫ ♫ A **Ted Shell** photo graces the cover of Brian Gilmore's *jungle nights & soda fountain rags*, and in the acknowledgements, special thanks are given to "the duke ellington society (love you madly)" and to **ted hudson**. ♫ ♫ Congratulations go to **Harvey Cohen** for earning an appointment as a Smithsonian Fellow, beginning January 1. **John Hasse** will be his advisor. ♫ ♫ A sign of the season's changing is the **Jerry Valburns'** pilgrimage from their home in Massachusetts to the one in Florida.

## Yep, That's Our Yvonne

We haven't been in downtown Washington to see it yet, but an artist's rendering shows just about the entire AARP headquarters building draped in fabric color photos, one a "be yourself" promotional depiction of **Yvonne Condell**. It's the same as the one reproduced here from a large format ad in the *Washington Post* and appearing in national media. A recently retired professor at Morehead State University in Minnesota, Dr. Condell, widow of our **Jim Condell**, continues her membership in our Society. She is very active in national and international learned and service organizations.



## And They "Ain't Been Nowhere Where They're Welcome Back Again" – E.K. Ellington

*Blues can take place in New York City, but not in Hawaii or any place in Canada. Hard times in St. Paul or Tucson is just depression. Chicago, St. Louis, and Kansas City still the best places to have the Blues. You cannot have the blues in any place that don't get rain.*

– From an internet posting of dubious authorship

## Unique Video of Duke, Strayhorn in Season Opener

by Angela Grimmer, Secretary

The Ellington Society opened its new season in early October with an unusual video program, featuring some of the band members who attended "Ellington 2000" in Hollywood this year. **Buster Cooper** soloed in "The Opener," from 1964, and **Herb Jeffries** sang "Solitude," an early 40s soundie. We got a little language lesson from **Duke** when he counted down from 10 to 1 in German, French and Italian during a 1962 performance of "Jam with Sam/VIP Boogie." This tune also featured a solo from **Bill Berry**, another Hollywood attendee.

**Buster** and **John Lamb** were in the band in January 1965, in a recently released Copenhagen performance. This fascinating video included highlights from **Carney**, **Hodges**, **Anderson**, **Nance** and **Woodyard**, and a particularly animated "Tootie for Cootie." **Paul Gonsalves** spent much of the set snoozing, horn in his mouth, until **Duke** roused him by introducing him to a Danish drummer, onstage to receive an award. **Duke** then introduced **Freddie Crump**, an American drummer who apparently had lived in Denmark for some time, known by **Duke** but unknown to us and not listed in any of the jazz encyclopedias.

At the end of the set, **Duke** introduced **Billy Strayhorn**, and the real treat was the encore. **Billy** strode onstage, poised and immaculate, every gesture perfect, so unlike the impression generated by the recent biography. The encore was "Take the A-Train," with **Strayhorn** on piano and **Duke** looking on, leading the band. This is believed to be the only film of **Billy** playing his most famous composition. It is a fascinating rendition, elegant, humorous and completely unlike **Duke's** version. **Billy** always claimed **Duke** never played it right, anyway. The encore alone makes this video worth acquiring, but we would still like to know, who is **Freddie Crump**?

[ *Ed. note: Angela thought it a good idea to ask our readers to help identify this mystery man. Could Duke have been enjoying a bit of whimsical put-on in introducing him? Hmmmmmm... There's a vocalist **Freddy Albeck** on **Ben Webster's** No Fool, No Fun CD (Storyville STCD 8304) featuring the Danish Radio Jazz Orchestra and another vocalist, **Matty Peters**, one of the original **Peters** sisters. Hmmmmmm... ]*

### THE DUKE ELLINGTON SOCIETY

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