

Ellingtonia

Newsletter Of
The Duke Ellington Society

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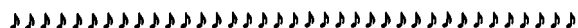
Theodore R. Hudson, Editor

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*Again This Year,
Do Something Creative On
On April 29
Hodie Dux Natus Est.*



Near-Record Storm Doesn't Stop East Coast Festival

"Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow!" may well have been a mantra at the five-day East Coast Jazz Festival in February. It attracted a large number of patrons; many had made room reservations at the festival hotel headquarters. Appreciative and physically and emotionally snug music lovers settled in for cool to hot music.

The over 100 sessions and concerts, many free, many taking place simultaneously, comprised a rich musical cornucopia—blues, jazz of various orientations, fusion, Latin, as well as instrument and voice clinics. In a *Washington Post* full-page review, vocalist Linda Hopkins is quoted as saying that of all the festivals she has been to worldwide, the East Coast Festival is the best.

A number of events showcased young musicians, no surprise since festival founder Ronnie Wells, herself a headline singer, is a dedicated and successful music educator, as is her husband Ron Elliston.

At the close of the festival on Sunday, those who could not get out by air, rail, motor vehicle, cross-country skis, or feet simply stayed at the hotel for an extra day or so. And therein lay realized possibilities: Shortly after noon on Monday, singers cleared their throats and musicians broke out their axes and what-have-you and they all started a jam session that lasted until about 10 that night!

See the Asian-American Orchestra

Mid-Atlantic area residents will have the opportunity to see the Asian American Orchestra, led by our member Dr. Anthony Brown, during its East Coast tour. It's scheduled for the Sackler-Freer Gallery on the evening of Sunday, 13 April, and for a matinee performance the next day at the Museum of American History's Carmichael Auditorium. Watch media for more details.

April Video Program: A Peek Inside the Nixon White House

by Mac Grimmer & Peter MacHare, Program Coordinators

It's only for a glimpse of Duke's birthday party, of course. This is the "official" government film of the event, attended by a "who's who" of jazz. We get to see Duke and some of the musicians arriving at the White House, then some of the concert, and even some of the jam session that closed the evening—quite a night. This was apparently taped off the air in Canada, and hasn't been released here yet. We'll also see film of the Ellington trio in Copenhagen, and a few other choice selections as well.

The date is **Saturday, April 5**, at the Grace Lutheran Church, 16th & Varnum Sts, NW—our usual meeting place—at **8 pm**. Don't miss this chance to see this fascinating event!

Quotation of the Month

Contributed by Mac Grimmer

Duke, phoning Willie Ruff (of the Mitchell-Ruff Duo) in the predawn hours, preparing to ask a favor:

One hopes not to disturb the sweet repose of the Muses' favorite French horn and bass man at this uncivilized hour, and please believe that this humble working slob prays forgiveness. But ah me, how one envies the exalted who've already achieved beyond measure, and whose riches and fame afford such luxurious leisure as yours. (Pause for breath) We want you to know that when we grow up, we want to be exactly like you..

— from *A Call to Assembly* by Willie Ruff

Your Last Issue?

This will be your last issue of *Ellingtonia* if you still haven't sent in your dues for calendar year 2003. Check the mailing label. If you see a single star ☆ next to your name, we haven't received your 2003 renewal.

Membership in the Duke Ellington Society is a bargain, only \$30 for an individual, \$50 for a couple, and \$5 for a student.

Send a check to the address on our masthead and you won't miss an issue.

A Listing of CDs That Jerry Valburn and Jack Towers Were Involved With

By Richard Ehrenzeller

This listing is meant as a guide for the upcoming [TDES] Members' Choice Meeting and is limited to CDs. In all probability there are some that have been overlooked. I have not mentioned the many compilation CDs that Jerry has been involved with. He has made most of the selections on the Classics Best of Jazz CDs for Ellingtonians. Next month I will talk about the many LP's Jerry has put out.

Duke Ellington Carnegie Hall Concerts - All on Prestige Records
January 1943 2PCD-34004-2
December 1944 2PCD-24073-2 Its liner notes are by Jerry.

January 1946 2PCD-24074-2
December 1947 2PCD-24075-2

Duke Ellington Live at Carnegie Hall Dec. 11, 1943 Storyville 103 8341

Duke Ellington-Carnegie Hall November 13, 1948 Vintage Jazz Classics VJC-1024/25-2

Duke Ellington-The Treasury Shows - All on DETS through Storyville Records

Vol. 1 903 9001
Vol. 2 903 9002
Vol. 3 903 9003
Vol. 4 903 9004
Vol. 5 903 9005
Vol. 6 903 9006

Duke Ellington-Stereo Reflections in Ellington Natasha Imports NI-4016

The 1932 true stereo recordings and 1940-42 broadcasts

Duke Ellington-Happy-Go-Lucky-Local Musicraft Records MVSCD-52

The complete Musicraft recordings-Jerry did the notes for this CD.

Duke Ellington Cotton Club 1938 - Archives of Jazz

Vol. 1 3801122
Vol. 2 3801132

The Duke In Washington-The '99 Conference Souvenir CD - No listed label-Put out by Storyville

Duke Ellington-Take the "A" Train-The Legendary Blanton-Webster Transcriptions

Vintage Jazz Classics VJC-1003-2

Duke Ellington-Stew Burp-Small Groups & Big Band 1936-1939 R/V 1001-CD

Various Artists-Christmas Jubilee Vintage Jazz Classics VJC 1016-2

Duke hosted the 1947 AFRS Jubilee Christmas show

Duke Ellington & Billy Strayhorn-Great Times

Jack and Jerry did the transfers for the original LP-It now can be found on the CD
 Original Jazz Classics OJCCD-108-2

Jack did audio work on the following CDs

Duke Ellington-Hot Summer Dance Red Baron AK 48631

Duke Ellington-All Star Road Band Doctor Jazz WGK 39137

Duke Ellington-All Star Road Band Vol. 2 EPM Musique/Doctor Jazz FDC 5011

The Five Volumes in the Duke Ellington World Broadcast Series

All on Circle Records

Vol. 1 CCD 101

Vol. 2 CCD 102

Vol. 3 CCD 103

Vol. 4 CCD 104

Vol. 5 CCD 105

Jack recorded and has mastered all legitimate issues of the 1940 Fargo recordings. They are currently available on *The Duke at Fargo 1940-Special 60th Anniversary Edition* Storyville 8316/17.

Jerry recorded the Duke Ellington concert for TDES of May 20, 1964. It can be found on the CD, *Duke Ellington-New York Concert* Music Masters 01612-65122-2

Jerry helped produce the CD, *Ellington '97 Conference Souvenir CD-The British Connection*. It has no label and was put out by Storyville.

The LPs of Jerry Valburn and Jack Towers

By Richard Ehrenzeller

Jerry and Jack have collaborated on many more LPs that are not on CD than the CDs mentioned in the previous issue. They prepared special LPs for the International Ellington Conferences from 1986 through 1990. There is also a 7-inch record issued for the Ellington '84 Conference. On his Up to Date label, Jerry issued 8 volumes of mostly previously unissued alternate takes from the 1920's through the 1960's mostly concentrating on the late 1940's and late 1950's Columbia recordings and 1950's Capitol ones. On his Jazz Guild label, Jerry issued a LP of the Washington, D.C. concert of April 20, 1955, another entitled *The Unusual Ellington*, which contains unusual tunes recorded in the northwestern U.S.A. from 1953 to 1955 and another entitled *Fargo Encores*. This LP had the first issue of some of the previously mentioned Fargo recordings, but also recordings from October 5, 1940. Jerry also issued two volumes of The Unheard and Seldom Heard Ellington on his Blu Disc label. On these LPs he mostly issued alternate takes of the small group recordings of the 1930's. Jerry did the transfer work for the Smithsonian LPs, *Duke Ellington 1938* and *Duke Ellington 1939*. Jack did the transfers on their LPs *Duke Ellington 1940*, *Duke Ellington 1941* and *Jump for Joy*.

The biggest body of work they did and their biggest contribution to the world of Ellingtonia is the Duke Ellington Treasury Series. It was originally issued as 49 LPs and will be reissued as 22 double CDs. There are many unusual items in these recordings. Pop tunes that were never commercially recorded, extended works and vintage Ellingtonian recordings abound in this set.

Lastly, the Social Security Administration issued a series of LPs for radio station use of notable jazz people introducing Ellington tunes. Jerry did this on four of the shows.

These articles appeared, respectively, in the February and March 2003 issues of the TDES Newsletter. We thank author Richard Ehrenzeller, editor Morris Hodara, and TDES for their kind permission for us to reprint them here.

Short Sheets . . .

James Harvey Springer, 1933-2002

Jimmy Springer, whom Morris Hodara states was already in New York's Duke Ellington Jazz Society when he joined in 1963, died in December. Springer was elected president of that Society in 1971 and again in 1985, his term extending into 1986 when New York hosted Ellington '86. He was a regular at these Annual International Ellington Study Group Conferences. We extend to Jimmy Springer's family and other loved ones our sincere condolences.

Strayhorn Tribute in Chicago

The Chicago Jazz Orchestra, led by Jeff Lindberg, will present "Something to Live For: A Tribute to Billy Strayhorn" at the Harold Washington Library Auditorium on 29 and 30 March. At the first concert, from its collection Billy Strayhorn Songs, Inc. will present Strayhorn scores to the Chicago Jazz Archive of the University of Chicago Library.

Dick Spottswood

A project that involved Dick Spottswood, *Screamin' and Hollerin' the Blues: The Worlds of Charley Patton*, was the winner in three Grammy categories: Boxed or Special Limited Edition Package, Album Notes, and Historical Album. One internet link claims that he wrote some of the album notes. Dick, who joined our Society back in its early years, has a popular and informative radio music show at 1 pm on Sundays over WAMU, 88.5 FM.

Youth Project Students Are Active

An art exhibit of Ellington Youth Project work has been on view at the Fort Dupont Ice Arena in Southeast Washington in connection with the 2003 World Figure Skating Championships. Other students enrolled in the Project from Stuart-Hobson and MacFarland Middle Schools sang at a fundraising event for the Foundation for Fighting Blindness.

Billy Squared: The Music Of Billie Holiday and Billy Strayhorn

Reported by Pat Braxton

As part of the Louis Armstrong Legacy Series, "Billy Squared," featuring music of Billie Holiday and Billy Strayhorn was presented by the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater on Friday, 28 February. The performers were vocalists René Marie and Allan Harris, accompanied by bassist Keter Betts, pianist Eric Reed, drummer Tim Horner, and later in the program, guitarist Ron Affif.

René Marie performed during the first half, singing a medley of Billie Holiday tunes, including "Lover Man" and ending with "Strange Fruit," which was preceded by an a capella introduction of the Southern song "Dixie" (a song that is unpopular among African-Americans) before launching into the haunting contrast of "Strange Fruit." Allan Harris' set included "Something to Live for," "Chelsea Bridge," "Just a-Sittin' and a Rockin'"; Marie joined him to the end with the lively "Take the 'A' Train."

The musicians performed up to their usual inventive standard on all the songs, and a pleasing night of good, live music was appreciated by the audience. Incidentally, Reed and Affif are featured on Harris' latest CD, a tribute to Billy Strayhorn titled *Love Came: The Songs of Strayhorn* (2001).

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Now You See It



Left and center photos Courtesy of Mac Grimmer;
Right photo Courtesy of Ted Hudson

Now You Don't



The Duke Ellington mural near the Metro stop at the corner of 13th and U Streets, NW in Washington, DC has been removed. Apparently some other use will be made of the building and/or space where it was. Actually, the mural was not painted on the wall; rather, it is on panels that can be mounted and dismantled. Word on the street is that it will be located elsewhere in the neighborhood, hopefully on the True Reformers building, the large structure in the background of the center photo, where it was said Duke gigged very early in his career. (The photo on the left was taken during a stop on a "Duke Ellington's Washington" tour several years ago. Recognize anyone?)

"Dramatis Felidae" (To Use Our Man's Term in MIMM) About Our Members

John E. Mason

If you phone John Mason and he doesn't answer you will hear the beginning of Billy Strayhorn's "Johnny Come Lately" as a French horn solo by Willie Ruff. A history professor at the University of Virginia, John plays the same instrument, well enough to perform regularly with area opera and classical groups.

Ben Pubols

Ben Pubols will deliver a series of presentations on *The History of Classic Jazz* for OASIS in Portland, Oregon, Part I being a lecture, "The Beginnings, the Blues & the Roaring Twenties," on 1 April.

Luvenia George

In January Luvenia George presented at Indiana State University a workshop, "Integrating the Research of Ethnomusicologists, Folklorists, and Humanists in the K-12 Curricula." The next day she lectured on "The Involvement of Ethnomusicologists and Humanities Scholars in the Public Sector."

The Reverend Janna Steed

Janna Steed has been interviewed for the independently produced Black Classical Masters radio program on Duke. If you have internet access, see BCM on page 3 of < plantingseedsmidwest.com >. A profile of her, including excerpts from her recent lectures and sermons, by United Methodist Communications, can be accessed on the web at < [http://umc.org/profiles/\[1102/steed/](http://umc.org/profiles/[1102/steed/)> for a one-month run.

Janna and pianist Dan Knight will be leading a worship service at the United Methodist Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew in New York City at the 11 am service on 2 March.

Ronnie Wells, Davey Yarborough, Brad Bradbie

Ronnie Wells deserves every accolade for another stellar East Coast Jazz Festival. Davey Yarborough, in addition to performing there, including backing up vocalists Linda Hopkins and Ernie Andrews, conducted a clinic on the saxophone. And for those with or wishing for "big ears," Brad Bradbie conducted a workshop on "Listening to Jazz."

Looking Ahead



Jazz Appreciation Month, April 2003
Watch Media for Particulars



Anthony Brown's Asian American Orchestra
13 April, 7:30 pm, Sackler-Freer Gallery
14 April, Noon, Carmichael Auditorium,
Smithsonian's National Museum of American History



Ellington Birthday Celebration
15 April, The Duke Ellington School of the Arts



It's a Hardbop Life
A Play Written by Gregory Charles Royal
(DC Native and Former Mercer Ellington Orchestra Trombonist)
Directed by Mike Malone
21-25 May - Ira Aldridge Theater, Howard University

March Program: Three Win Banana Bread!

by Peter MacHare

Bill Hasson not only treated us to an eclectic selection of Ellington at our March meeting, but he made us work for our bread as well. Bill, as he usually does, created an unusual vehicle to introduce the music he played for us. In the first half of the meeting, Bill presented a series of riddles. The answer to each riddle was the name of an Ellington composition. Thus "the desert" yielded "Caravan;" rhymes with "them" yielded "Blem." Bill even engaged in pantomime, becoming a tourist for "A Tourist Point Of View" and rising early from bed to see the sun rise for "I Like the Sunrise."

I am pleased to report that none of Bill's riddles went unanswered. He brought a loaf of home-made banana bread to be given to the person who answered the most riddles correctly. The bread was shared by Ted Hudson, Patricia Willard, and Ted Shell (our champion riddlers).

The second half of Bill's program was even more original, as Bill told us the story of a man named Ray who was given a second chance on earth after he had already died and gone to heaven. Ray came back in the 1920s and took the train to Harlem, where he feasted on beautiful music and beautiful women. The soundtrack to Bill's story about Ray, of course, was all Duke Ellington. "A Cotton Cub Stomp" welcomed Ray to Harlem. "West Indian Pancake" symbolized Ray's exploration of Harlem's diversity. Finally Ray met the love of his life, his "Satin Doll," but she eventually brushed him off with "Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me."

Bill, your riddles were fun. Your story was charming. But, most of all, the music was out of this world.

Added Attraction for Language Convention

As one of its adjunct cultural attractions for registrants and others during its national convention in Washington in late April, the College Language Association has scheduled a four-hour "Duke Ellington's DC: A Tour of the Historic Shaw Neighborhood in the Nation's Capital." The price includes visits to the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House, Lincoln Theater, Whitelaw Hotel, and African American Civil War Memorial as well as a five-block walk along U Street and a lunch break.

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