

Ellingtonia

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Luvenia George Donates Papers To Indiana University Repository

Ethnomusicologist, educator, and author Dr. Luvenia A. George, a member of our Executive Board, has turned over her collection of interviews, print materials, sheet music, photographs of gospel composers and artists, and other primarily religious materials to the Archives of African American Music and Culture at Indiana University (AAAMSC).

An announcement in an AAAMSC publication notes that in addition to the gospel focus, "Included in the George papers are many materials related to her work at the Smithsonian Institution . . . As coordinator of the Ellington Youth Project, she co-authored the award-winning *Beyond Category: Duke Ellington Education Kit* Accompanying materials demonstrate the scope of this project, which made archival resources and scholarly research available for the development of new educational curricula. George's many other [Smithsonian] activities are also documented through programs and project files." The Ellington kit that grew out of Dr. George's Youth Project has been widely adopted as is or adapted for curricular purposes by educational institutions, museums, and libraries.

Rich in primary and secondary sources, the Luvenia A. George papers will be available for researchers, students, performers, and educators.

Several of our other members have contributed collections to scholarly and academic facilities. Among them are Dr. Ted Shell, whose Theodore A. Shell Collection at the Smithsonian is a corollary of the Ellington Collection there, and Dr. Yvonne Condell, who recently contributed the late James Condell materials to the Marr Archives at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

February Program: Ellington's D.C. Farewell

by Mac Grimmer and Peter MacHare, Program Coordinators

Ted Shell will present Ellington's final concert in Washington, DC at our February 3 program. This recording is not commercially available, as Dr. Shell recorded the concert himself at Georgetown University on February 10, 1974.

This concert, as you may imagine, has considerable sentimental value to those who live and work in Washington, as it was Ellington's final performance in the city of his birth.

We will skip our program for March (see below), but Peter Machare will present a program featuring Ellington's Trombonists on Saturday, April 7, so do plan to make the "plunge" as we "slide" through the history of Ellington's famous trombone sections—"God's trombones" as they were sometimes called.

Our meetings on **February 3** and **April 7** will take place at our usual time and place—**8 pm at Grace Lutheran Church, 16th and Varnum Streets, NW, Washington, DC**. Also as usual, guests are welcome.

Kennedy Center Honors Event Preempts Our March Program

We will NOT have a meeting on Saturday, March 3, as a considerable number of our members expect to attend the "Jazz in Our Time All-Star Opening Night Concert and Award Ceremony" at the Kennedy Center honoring many jazz legends, including Ellingtonians Louie Bellson and Clark Terry. At press time, many tickets are still available by calling 202-4676-4600 or on the internet at < www.kennedy-center.org >.

Tizolito: Portraits of the Artist as a Young Man

by Dick Spottswood

Tizolito was what they called Juan Tizol (1900-1984) when he was a child prodigy in San Juan, Puerto Rico, performing in ensembles led by his celebrated uncle (and adoptive father) Manuel Tizol (1876-1940). These early snapshots confirm



Orquesta de Manuel Tizol en 1910

Juan's presence on records made in San Juan by the Orquesta Tizol in 1910 for Columbia. Victor records came to San Juan in 1917 and recorded both Orquesta Tizol and Manuel's Banda Municipal de San Juan, with Juan playing valve trombone.

The 1910 shot shows Juan, holding a violin (his first instrument), down front to the right of the kettledrum. Manuel stands with hands folded behind the drummer; Juan's cousin Francisco (Paco) Tizol (b. 1893) stands at Manuel's left, holding another violin. In the other photo, Juan stands third from left, holding a euphonium (valved baritone horn), a few days before his 17th birthday, January 22. Future famed composer and band leader

Rafael Hernández is seated second from left with a violin. Manuel is front and center, and Paco is seated at right with a cello.

Though the existence of these early documents make Juan the first jazz musician to record, the music has little relationship to jazz. Most performances are *danzas*, examples of a formal ballroom dance genre



Orquesta Manuel Tizol

Plaza del Mercado, San Juan, PR, ca. January 10, 1917

fashionable in nineteenth-century Puerto Rico. *Danzas* could be musically sophisticated and they provided important grounding for young Tizolito, who later brought his considerable skills to the service of the Ellington ensemble.

It's interesting to get a sense of the early days of one of the most respected (and least celebrated) mainstays of the Ellington and Harry James orchestras over the years.

Special thanks to Juan Tizol chronicler Prof. Basilio

Serrano for confirming Juan's presence in these photographs, for sharing the one from 1910, and for much of this information. There's a CD from England that includes two 1917 Orquesta Tizol tracks, *Early Music of the North Caribbean*, Harlequin CD 67.

Ed. Note: Musicologist and author Richard "Dick" Spottswood, a long-time member of our Society, is responsible for thousands of vernacular music releases in the United States. Though he is a resident of Florida, his "Obsolete Music Hour" may be heard on American University's WAMU 88.5FM from 1-3 pm on Sundays.

Barrie Lee Hall, Jr. — Conservator and Innovator

The story goes that when Texan tenor saxophonist Arnett Cobb saw to it Duke Ellington met and became apprised of the trumpet artistry of Barrie Lee Hall, Jr., then a student at Texas Southern University in Houston, the maestro's reaction was "Ah, how come you're not playing in my band?" And so it came to pass: Several days later Hall was awakened at home in the wee small hours by a phone call (well, we have heard of Ellington's diurnal habits); it was Duke asking him to join his orchestra. Reference books indicate that Hall did join the band at the Shamrock Hotel right there in Houston in June 1973. According to Hall, he "was a sideman wanting more solos. . . . My duties were ordinary . . .," and he modestly states, "I had to work very hard to find my place among the great musicians in the band."

After Duke's death he stayed on with the Ellington band led by Mercer Ellington, then variations of it led by himself and then by Paul Ellington—and at times still later, himself again. A superb trumpet and fluegelhorn player, he proved to be a highly talented arranger, transcriber, and composer as well.

Barrie Lee Hall, Jr. became the literal "inheritor" of Cootie Williams' trumpet. As he explains it, "We did a documentary at Mercer's apartment one day, and I've forgotten the date. A film crew out of England filmed everything. Cootie came over and to my surprise they called me to join in with Cootie's interview where Cootie presented me with his last horn. I was happy to get it, but everyone in the apartment was in tears. It was a great moment. Somewhere in England is that tape. I had the horn restored to working order and I am waiting for a day when I can do a tribute to Cootie playing his horn. We were good friends."

Hall has been more than an abstract, or symbolic, heir. An excellent example is *Barrie Lee Hall, Jr.: The Duke Ellington Small Band* (M&N Records MN0039). Don't get excited though; this CD is not a slavish, repertoire revisiting of those 1940s classics. Rather, there are fresh small group offerings, by first-rate musicians who at some time played with a band bearing the maestro's name, among them Duke's last drummer, Rocky White. Duke would applaud their proficiency and individualism and inspired musicianship.

Among the group's treatments on this release are Duke's "G for Groove," "Heaven," "Thanks for the Beautiful Land of the Delta," "Caravan," and "The Shepherd." The latter shows how sensitively Hall has mastered the tone, intense emotion, and techniques of Cootie Williams without sacrificing his own interpretative nuances and musical personality. (Play a trick on a "hip" friend with a blindfold test on this one.)

For an Ellington/Cootie devotee, this one tune is worth the price of the CD. And you get much more good music, to boot!

Member Inducted in South Africa's First Sports Hall of Fame

by Louise Mokone

On December 7, 2006 I was sitting in the enormous Conference Center at the magnificent Emperors Palace in Johannesburg, South Africa. When the lights were dimmed in this state-of-the-art facility with its magnificent chandeliers, there was hardly an empty seat in the room. People had come from as far as New Zealand and as close as Cape Town. This was the venue for the First Sports Hall of Fame induction event.

With pride, I approached the stage to receive the award on behalf of my husband, Steve "Kalamazoo" Mokone, the first black South African to play professional soccer in England. As the tall, well-spoken radio announcer, who served as moderator, recalled the playing days of "Kalamazoo," the enormity of his contribution to a country in the midst of its darkest days was overwhelming. Overcome with emotion, I descended the stairs carrying a 12- by 20-inch award that weighs about 10 pounds, returned to my table basking in the love the audience expressed for my husband. The award reads, "Steve Mokone, Soccer Hall of Fame, Class of 2006." A marble inlay boasts the Hall's logo and a bronze coin commemorating the event is attached at the bottom.

Although Steve was unable to be present because of his health, I tried to represent him well. I knew this was an emotional moment in his life—to be honored by the country of his birth—a country that, with his help, was kicked out of the International Olympics during the Apartheid era—a country that now recognizes the heroes of the past—a country that he is now a part of. He proudly accepted this induction into the First South African Sports Hall of Fame from the rainbow nation of South Africa.

Ed. Note: A street in Amsterdam is named in honor of Steve Mokone, and he is the subject of a book and a documentary. Following his pro sports career, first in Europe and then in Australia and Canada, he earned a doctorate in psychology, taught at the Univ. of Rochester, and was a clinical psychologist. He had become a jazz fan as a teenager, and is a long-time friend of Ellington protégé Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand), a fellow South African. An Ellington enthusiast, Dr. Mokone has been a member of our Society for a number of years.

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

About Our Members

Don Rouse

In the current issue of *Tailgate Ramblings*, Don Rouse has an illuminating review of Lawrence Gushee's *Pioneers of Jazz: The Story of the Creole Band* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

Scott Schwartz

We just learned that during the summer the Schwartz Family Headin' Home band traveled to Washington to perform at the National Museum of American History. Scott continues as head of the Sousa Archives and Center for American Music at the University of Illinois-Urbana.

Billy Strayhorn Documentary and Its Soundtrack Readied for Public

Blue Note has announced its release

in January of the companion
soundtrack for the documentary

Billy Strayhorn: Lush Life,

to be premiered on PBS on February 8.

The telecast is being presented as part of
PBS' "Independent Lens" series.

Ellington and Strayhorn Works Included In Extensive Shakespeare Celebration

by Patricia Braxton

The Shakespeare in Washington Festival, running January through June 2007, features over 100 programs of quality theater, dance, art, music, and film. Several will be of special interest to Ellington and Strayhorn fans:

Dame Cleo Laine and Sir John Dankworth will perform "**Shakespeare and All That Jazz**," which includes Ellington/Strayhorn compositions, on **February 18** at the Kennedy Center Concert Hall.

The "Words on Will" series will feature **Mercedes Ellington** as she talks about her grandfather Duke Ellington's composition *Such Sweet Thunder* at the Folger Shakespeare Library on **May 15**.

In keeping with this theme, the **Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra** will play Ellington and Strayhorn's *Such Sweet Thunder* on **May 20** at the Kennedy Center Concert Hall.

For more information online about the Festival, go to Shakespeareinwashington.org.

New Year's Party Just Plain Fun

by Peter MacHare, subbing for Gina Rollins, Secretary

We welcomed 2007 in a grand fashion at our New Year's Party of Saturday, January 6. Revelers were treated to a variety of food and drink as well as splendid Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn music.

Highlights of the evening included our traditional "rip roarin'" version of "The Twelve Days of Christmas" led by Geneva Hudson. Vice-president Ted Hudson prepared a very difficult trivia quiz that was presented by our delightful Louise Mokone. As a group, we proved ourselves masters of Ellington Trivia.

We are looking forward to a productive and enjoyable 2007, anticipating performances by Louie Bellson and spending another year basking in the light of the Maestro, Duke Ellington.

Oh, No!

East Coast Jazz Festival Postponed

A recent e-mailed letter conveys the bad news that "...the Rockville DoubleTree Hotel—home of the East Coast Jazz Festival—is undergoing major renovations. . . . FMJS [Fish Middleton Jazz Scholarship Fund] and the hotel management had anticipated that the undertaking would be at a stage of completion that would accommodate the annual East Coast Jazz Festival for 2007; unfortunately, it will not. Therefore, it is with disappointment that we must postpone the 16th Annual East Coast Jazz Festival."

In the meantime, FMJS encourages its members, supporters, and friends to come out to its quarterly concerts and other events throughout the year.

For current news about FMJS and its purposes and programs, go online to www.eastcoastjazz.com.

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