

Ellingtonia

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William McFadden, Editor

Theodore R. Hudson, Founder and Editor Emeritus

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Courtesy Carlyle Productions

"Discover the Jazz in You" at the 2013 Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival - February 15-18



Another example of how fortunate most of us are to live in the greater Washington/Baltimore region is having an important event such as the 2013 **Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival** staged literally in our own back yard, the Hilton Hotel, 1750 Rockville Pike in Rockville, MD.

By member request, here is a condensed Festival Main Stage schedule:

Friday, February 15

- 7:00 PM **Orrin Evans featuring Tim Warfield**
8:30 PM **Gregory Porter** featuring The Mid-Atlantic Jazz Orchestra, under the direction of Paul Carr
10:00 PM **Paul Carr** featuring Pat Bianchi, **Bobby Broom**, & Byron Landham

Saturday, February 16

- 12:00 PM **Todd Marcus featuring Don Byron**
1:30 PM The Vocal Summit featuring Sharon Clark, Lynette Washington, **Carmen Bradford**
3:00 PM Akiko Tsuruga Quartet
5:00 PM High School Band Competition Finals
7:00 PM **Larry Willis Quintet**
8:30 PM Women In Jazz featuring Sharon Clark, Helen Sung, Amy Shook, Allison Miller, Sharel Cassidy
10:00 PM **Dr. Lonnie Smith**

Sunday, February 17

- 1:00 PM Bruce Williams featuring Pat Bianchi
2:30 PM **Michael O'Neill** featuring **Kenny Washington**
4:00 PM The Cookers - **George Cables, Billy Harper, Billy Hart, Cecil McBee, Eddie Henderson, Craig Handy, and David Weiss**
7:00 PM **Bobby Watson**
8:30 PM **Stephanie Jordan**--A Tribute to Lena Horne
10:00 PM **Joey DeFrancesco**

In addition to this wonderful lineup, there are jam sessions, interviews, discussion/lectures, line dancing, and the best of high school jazz orchestras and ensembles from throughout the mid-Atlantic states. Tickets and full schedule are at:

www.midatlanticjazzfestival.org

February Meeting Ellington and the Next Generation - Charles Mingus

Of all the jazz artists emerging from the 1940's, few were as fervent and vocal in their acknowledgement of Duke's musical influence as was bass virtuoso and composer, Charles Mingus. Selecting some of Mingus' best-known recordings from the 50's, 60's and 70's, we'll hear how his bands interpreted Duke and Strayhorn, as well as listen to some original compositions which strongly evidence The Ellington Effect. No program of this sort would be complete without the 1962 trio recording of the Maestro, Mingus and Max Roach: *Money Jungle*, which documents how Duke rode herd on those two whippersnappers *for the length of an entire LP*.

The meeting will take place at our usual hangout, **Grace Lutheran Church, 16th and Varnum Streets, NW** in our Hero's birthplace of **Washington, DC, on Saturday, 2 February 2013 at 7:00 PM**.

Our **pot luck** method for delectable small plates seems to be the way to go, and we ask you to bring along something yummy. If you're without a dish, come anyway! Management will provide the soft drinks and ice.

EVERYBODY Look Handsome!

As our Hero would say for the Orchestra's curtain call, so do we shine the spotlight on all our members and friends who earned Certificates of Appreciation for services to and/or contributions published in *Ellingtonia* during 2012: **Patricia Braxton, Josie Childs, Mr. Saturday Dance, Bill Hasson, Geneva Hudson, Theodore Hudson, Bro. Juniper, Art Luby, Erica MacHare, Peter MacHare, John Edwin Mason, Kathy McFadden, Kathy McFadden's Spouse, Don Rouse, Bill Saxonis, Patricia Willard.**

Take a BIG one (a bow, that is) - a Cootie Williams bow! And thank you all so very much.

MERRY-GO-ROUND . . . by Ye Editor

Let's begin by saying that January's meeting was a blast, but it just wasn't the same without **Peter MacHare**. The lack of his gentle presence and pastoral leadership made for a slightly off-putting, albeit successful evening. Yours truly suddenly came to the realization that he is now the *presiding officer* of the Society, on top of wearing the editor's hat. Yikes! Peter, we beg you not to cut us loose.

As of this writing, the Society is still without a President. Notice also that there is a vacant seat on the Society's Board of Directors. Our appeal for members to come forward and fill these positions was made in this column last month, and it's getting rather embarrassing to continue airing the issue in our newsletter. We are confident that all will be resolved before you read next month's *Ellingtonia*, but questions on how The Duke Ellington Society, Inc. will be structured and maintained will undoubtedly persist.

In our view, this predicament is a function of contemporary human nature at the tipping point of generational transition. That's a fancy way of stating that the Baby-Boomers are *really* being left in charge, the Greatest Generation having done more than its share of heavy lifting. For many of us, this discovery elicits a recoil of shock and dread at the prospect of such responsibility being imposed. In short, folks these days are less inclined to participate in, let alone serve in, group endeavors, regardless of mission or purpose.

Claire Gordon was kind enough to write and add her perspective: *As for the question of dwindling membership, as was mentioned, the aging of enthusiasts in many organizations is also leading to smaller numbers. The interests of most young people has been formed, is being piqued, let's be honest--by what they hear, what is currently popular, and not the music of another century. We oldsters continue to be moved and are saddened (bewildered?) that the youngsters prefer other genres. The truth is, the day will come when the numbers are too small to continue. Those of us who knew or actually heard Duke and the orchestra play are now at least 50 years old. Times and tastes change. Nothing lasts forever. That is the reality. Meanwhile a few of us will continue to care. We are still on hand. Keep it going in 2013!*

We are committed to doing just that. We are in it for the long haul. It is comforting, though, to believe that

there will always be cultured musicians of distinction and discernment who will choose to play Ellington and Strayhorn.

However, now there comes a "strange feeling" to note we were only 20 years of age in 1974. Duke's presence was constant to those of us kids weaned on television: annual appearances on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, *Kraft Music Hall*, *The Bell Telephone Hour*, *Hollywood Palace*, to name several. Buying the LP's. Finally seeing him in concert, 1972-73 . . . always like an older relative, Duke was.

One rarely meets anyone younger, even slightly younger, who might engage in a conversation centering on similar vivid recollections. Nevertheless, we are utterly tickled whenever we get a chance to share the knowledge. Yin and yang. A strange feeling.

Moving on . . . We began California dreamin' when we learned that *The Far East Suite*, and selections from other Ellington Suites were being performed in Santa Monica on January 14 by the **Mike Price Jazz Orchestra**. This 16-piece organization boasts some of the foremost first-call musicians in LA, including tenorman **Pete Christlieb**. Follow trumpeter/conductor Price at: www.mikepricejazz.com.

Remembering the late Victor Gaskin stirs the old nostalgia kettle: a gig with the Sir Roland Hanna Quartet at DC's The Childe Harold in the mid-1970's. Then a couple of years later, accompanying Dr. Billy Taylor during his frequent stints at the Knickerbocker Steak House in NYC. Victor was one of the best, always working.

Mona Granager of **Storyville Records** in Denmark sent New Year's greetings, and wants us to know that, "At long last we are ready to launch our new website." The net address remains:

www.storyvillerecords.com

Lastly, our correspondent from way out in Villesville, **Mr. Saturday Dance** reported that when standing in the N.W. DC plaza which contains the statue of Ellington, he gazed eastward to Florida Ave., N.W. and focused on a large storefront sign reading, "SMADA MARKET." Further investigation failed to locate other small neighborhood businesses possibly named "SNIBOR" or "CHARPOY."

Sign up for same-day-as-published, *in color* email delivery of *Ellingtonia* at Ellingtonia@comcast.net.

That's it for this ride on your Merry-Go-Round . . .

What's a "Felsted Recording"?

At our Billy Strayhorn Member's Choice in December, **Bob Reny** shared two selections from an LP issued in 1963 with Billy as leader of a septet comprised of Johnny Hodges, Russell Procope, Harold "Shorty" Baker, Quentin Jackson, Al Hall, and Oliver Jackson. We listened to "Cue's Blues" and "When I Dream of You." Bob casually identified them as from one of the "Felsted" recordings.

The name refers to a series of nine LP's produced by Stanley Dance in the US for British Decca, issued on their Felsted subsidiary label. The series, which Dance named "Mainstream Jazz" was intended primarily for European audiences (released in 1958-59).

Leaving the debate over the term, "Mainstream," as well as the definition of "Felsted" to others, we were delighted to learn that *Billy Strayhorn: Cue for Saxophone* was recorded on April 14, 1959 as the final Felsted Mainstream Collection LP.

The other eight LP's consisted of individual sessions led by Rex Stewart, Dicky Wells, Earl Hines, Cozy Cole, Buster Bailey, Budd Johnson, Buddy Tate, and Coleman Hawkins.

Fortunately, the Felsted Collection was reissued digitally in 2011 in two versions: a 5-CD box set entitled, *The Complete Felsted Mainstream Collection* (Solar Records 4569908), and a deluxe 9-CD set called, *The Complete Stanley Dance FELSTED Mainstream Jazz Recordings 1958-1959* (Fresh Sound Records B005). Each is available at your favorite internet purveyor.

Quotations of the Month by Rex Stewart

"In 1937, Duke had a rather serious operation which caused a lay-off for all the band. I did not have anything much to do one day, so I picked up the axe and started blowing. The valves were sorta stuck from not being in use, and caused me to produce a tone related to concert G instead of C. This was for all intents and purposes the G-sound on the horn, but it sounded like it was being heard through a fog! I liked the sound, so I tried to find other sounds or notes that would relate to the G, enough to form a sequence, and, sure as you please, after a half-hour or so, I found a few more. Then I got excited and called Duke at the hospital and tried to explain what I had discovered. Duke was always on the alert for off-beat facets of original music, and told me to bring the horn down, and that very next day 'Boy Meets Horn' was in the works." Source: as quoted by Francis Thorne in "Rex William Stewart, Jr.," an essay in Appendix II of Rex Stewart, *Jazz Masters of the 30s*, p. 219.

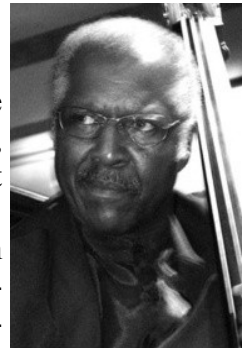
Victor Gaskin (1934-2012)

Roderick Victor Gaskin, one of the leading jazz bassists of the 1960's, 70's, and 80's passed on July 14 at his residence in St. Croix, V. I.

His tenure with Duke Ellington and His Orchestra (1969-1970) included recordings with Duke in duet, trio, and octet settings. Society members will recognize him as "first chair" bass on the Grammy Award-winning *Duke Ellington's 70th Birthday Concert*.

During the 1960's, Mr. Gaskin elevated his musical profile as a member first of Les McCann Ltd., then with the Cannonball Adderley Sextet. He was also associated at various times with ensembles led by Paul Horn, Dr. Billy Taylor, and Clark Terry.

For months Wikipedia, Facebook and other internet sources have carried "unconfirmed reports" of his death. *Ellingtonia* recently found an obituary in the July 20, 2012 edition of the *St. Croix Source* newspaper confirming that indeed, Mr. Gaskin's viewing, funeral Mass, and interment would take place on July 26.



www.lightstalkers.org/ming-chien

Quotations of the Month, contd.

"I really cannot venture a guess as to how much Ellington influenced me—perhaps more than I am aware of or can bear to admit. But I do feel that the man, as a leader, was so magnificently gifted with so much open-mindedness and eagerness, so keenly analytical of the sounds and the impressions and moods created by combinations of various instruments that if he was the artist, we, of course, were the palette."

Ibid, p. 221.

(Ed. Note: We thank Ted Hudson for unearthing these gems.)

Meeting Programs: It's Up to You

That's right. You have a choice of suggesting an audio/video program topic, or better still, generating a program you'll present. Can you think of a better way to demonstrate your Ellington *bona fides* while sharpening your public speaking skills?

One of our astute members proffered the suggestion to organize an evening featuring the many accomplished vocalists within our ranks. Our only question is, "a cappella, or light accompaniment?" It's doable, as they say. What say you? Our Society has the brain power and talent to make every meeting memorable.

“Dramatis Felidae” (To Use Our Man’s Term in *MIMM*)

About Our Members . . .
by Theodore R. (Ted) Hudson

In the Acknowledgements in his recently published *Juan Tizol: His Caravan Through American Life and Culture*, author Basilio Serrano thanks **Patricia Willard** for, among other things, “providing valuable information,” “providing insights through various contacts,” and for being “very motivating and . . . gracious.”

He also thanks **Richard “Dick” Spottswood** for leads on early jazz musicians from Puerto Rico and for identifying island musicians in jazz bands of the 1920’s. Our readers may remember Spottswood’s writing in our own *Ellingtonia* on the early personal and musical experiences of Tizol.

The article about **Davey Yarborough** in our January issue has been reprinted in *The Prodder*, a publication of Peoples UC Church in Washington, DC. A different photograph of him appears with the reprint, though. Incidentally, Davey is vice president of Peoples Jazz Society there.

Jenkins Orphanage Band Alumni in Jazz History

The Jenkins Orphanage, founded in Charleston, SC in 1892, became famous in part because of its Orphanage Band that over years raised money for the institution. What is not as well known is that the members of this band, a number of whom became respected professional jazzmen, were not just from the orphanage but from the community as well. According to P.G. Daniels in *The Jenkins Orphanage Band: A Study Guide*, among those who at some time were members of the band were William “Cat” Anderson, Rufus “Speedy” Jones, and Freddie Greene (“the human metronome”). Source: *John Meffert, the Avery Research Center, et al, Charleston, SC in the Black America Series.*



This handsome portrait of the great Louie Bellson was recently unveiled by celebrated painter Merryl Jaye (merryljaye.com). An 8.5x11” art print is now available through our dear friend Francine Bellson at the “Mrs. B’s Giftshop” page on the *Louie Bellson Legacy* (www.louiebellson.info). Or you can write to Mrs. B at: bellson_1@att.net.

We Start 2013 In Festive Tradition

by Art Luby, Secretary

The Society, as has now become traditional, had its Holiday celebration on January 5th. The members were generous with refreshments and we thank all of those who took the time to bring food and (alcohol-free) drink. All other traditions were festively adhered to. Former President Ted Hudson presented certificates of recognition to contributors to *Ellingtonia*, or to various other Society endeavors. Quite a few very nice gifts, new and pre-owned, were given away in a raffle. We, of course, also preserved our practice of singing, “The Twelve Days of Christmas” under the expert direction of Geneva Hudson. Some of us even managed to stay on key. As always, a fun time was had by all of us who partook of the warm Ducal fellowship.

Wanted: Your Ellingtonia Contributions

Please remember that we heartily encourage members and friends to submit items for publication. Your news, commentary, opinions, humor, art, reviews, essays, research, fiction, poetry, and anecdotes are gratefully received. It’s a good way to make a valuable contribution to your Society, while finally getting those important thoughts in print.

Gentle Reminder: Dues are due. Memberships are by the calendar year, and we value your membership. Please make your renewal today.

To Join or to Renew Membership

Please Send Your Payment to:
The Duke Ellington Society, Inc.
PO Box 15591, Washington, DC 20003, USA
Our dues remain a bargain:
Member, \$30; Couple, \$50; Student \$5
First-Time-Ever Member, Just \$20

THE DUKE ELLINGTON SOCIETY, INC.

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