

Ellingtonia

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Courtesy Carlyle Productions

Can you help . . . ?

In Search of Lost Ellington TV Footage

Recently, our Society was contacted with a request for advice and suggestions about a project currently in the works by acclaimed writer and jazz authority, Nat Hentoff with John Sorensen for Anthology Film Archives in New York.

The Anthology endeavor will honor the jazz TV programs that Mr. Hentoff made in the 1950s and '60s with producer Robert Herridge - shows which featured Billie Holiday, Lester Young, Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane, Charles Mingus, Coleman Hawkins, Count Basie and, Duke Ellington. Among the most important of these programs was an hour-long special for MetroMedia, *A Portrait in Music: Duke Ellington and His Orchestra*, which aired on September 6, 1964.

This program was long thought to be lost, but recently an audio recording of the complete show surfaced in Italy, and the producers remain hopeful that a video copy - even if only a bootleg - may also have survived. They would deeply appreciate any suggestions and advice our members may have on means by which we might attempt to contact collectors of Ellingtonia who may have a video copy of this rare program in their possession.

In addition, Mr. Sorensen learned that Ellington's copyist, Tom Whaley, filmed extensive home movies of the making of the show, and both he and Mr. Hentoff are now hoping to track down this footage, as well.

Their ultimate goal is to include a special tribute to the Ellington show in their upcoming screening series at Anthology and, if possible, to reissue the "lost" show in DVD form.

Nat Hentoff feels that the Ellington show was among the best and most important jazz programs ever broadcast. He recalls, "Herridge and I spent a long night persuading Duke Ellington to do an uncut 'Tone Paral

(Continued on Page 2 under Lost Video.)

Reminiscing in Tempo

The First International Duke Ellington Study Group Conference—May 1983

Yes, it really is 30 years since our Society planned and hosted the very first of what would be annual meetings of the International Duke Ellington Conference on May 5-8, 1983 here in Washington.

For the May meeting, **Ed Morris** and **Bob Reny** (with major assistance from **Ted Hudson**) will moderate a program filled with first-hand accounts, memorabilia, and of course the music which defined this significant landmark event.

The evening's music will be **Jack Towers'** recording of the May 8, 1983 concert: "**Brooks Kerr and George Duvivier Recreate Ellington/Blanton Duets.**"

For those of us who attended the Conference, please come prepared to share **your own memories** and help make the **May 4** meeting marvelous. Even if you're not able to attend, please consider emailing your recollections to *Ellingtonia*, and we'll read them to the group.

The nostalgia fest will take place as always at **Grace Lutheran Church, 16th and Varnum Streets, NW** in the Maestro's birthplace, **Washington, DC** on **Saturday, 4 May 2013**. Remember: **Our meetings now begin at 7:30 PM.**

Whether sweet or substantive, **pot luck** is how we share the edibles, so don't forget to bring something good. Even if you do forget, come anyway because we do love you madly! Management brings beverages and ice.

*We now have a new mailing address
for correspondence and dues renewal:*

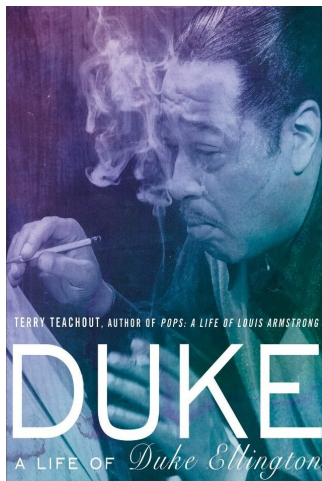
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New Ellington Bio Coming This Fall

Wall Street Journal columnist and lively arts expert, **Terry Teachout** is in final preparation for his eagerly-awaited Ellington biography, and a publication date of October 17 has been set.

In an April 24 posting on his entertaining and informative blog, *About Last Night*, Mr. Teachout posted the following update, reprinted here with his gracious permission:

"I'm currently fussing over the interior design of *Duke: A Life of Duke Ellington*. This morning I sent an e-mail to Emily Wunderlich of Gotham Books in which I explained where to place the illustrations, which will be interspersed throughout the text. Instead of using page numbers, which will not be set in stone until the entire book is set up in type, I identified the relevant paragraphs by quoting their opening words. The resulting list amounts to a "found poem" about Ellington. I thought it might amuse you to see it."



*Ellington's surface qualities were exploited
None of it showed
J.E. was born in North Carolina
Another way in which Ellington enriched
Many of his superstitions centered on death
After wrapping up a two-week run
What they cannot show us is how the band
When it came to sex, though
"Raymond? He has perfect taste"
The band itself continued to perform
Unlike Strayhorn's break with Ellington
A Drum Is a Woman was to be a poetic allegory
Sargeant, a longtime admirer
President Nixon addressed the crowd
So he stayed on the road
From then on he made no secret*

Lost Video (Continued from Page 1.)

lel to Harlem' – maybe his favorite among his long pieces. Duke couldn't believe that a television producer would go for a serious work of that size. That hour was the most exhilarating exploration of Ellingtonia ever on television."

Anthology Film Archives is a film archive and theater located at 32 Second Avenue on the corner of East Second Street in the East Village neighborhood of Manhattan, New York City devoted to the preservation and exhibition of experimental film.

Mr. Sorenson can be contacted at:
johnsorensen10012@yahoo.com.

An excellent profile on the taping of the show, "Videotaping with Duke" was published in Martin Williams' book, *Jazz Heritage* (Oxford University Press, 1983).



One More Time

Last month, this photo of emerging talent Ben Williams by **Olu Yemisi** was published in color for subscribers to our pdf edition. In the print edition, poor contrast prevented those readers from clearly seeing how handsome Ben is. We're happy to remedy the situation once and for all.

First Chair, Percussion— TRUE or FALSE ?

When it comes to Duke's drummers, we instinctively think of the mainstays: Sonny Greer, Louie Bellson, Sam Woodyard, and Rufus 'Speedy' Jones. Yet there were numerous subs and replacements working with the Orchestra over the years. How many can you correctly identify? (Studio sessions don't count.)
Answers on Page 4. (Our thanks to **Claes Englund** from the Duke Ellington Society of Sweden for inspiring this quiz.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Dave Bailey | 11. Jo Jones |
| 2. Kenny Clarke | 12. Butch Miles |
| 3. Cozy Cole | 13. Sonny Payne |
| 4. Frank Dunlop | 14. Charlie Persip |
| 5. Panama Francis | 15. Bernard Purdie |
| 6. Chico Hamilton | 16. Max Roach |
| 7. Lionel Hampton | 17. Grady Tate |
| 8. Jake Hanna | 18. Ed Thigpen |
| 9. Johnny Hodges, Jr. | 19. Cootie Williams |
| 10. Elvin Jones | 20. Shadow Wilson |

First Time on Compact Disc *Duke Ellington and His Orchestra Live at The Cave, Vancouver 1970*

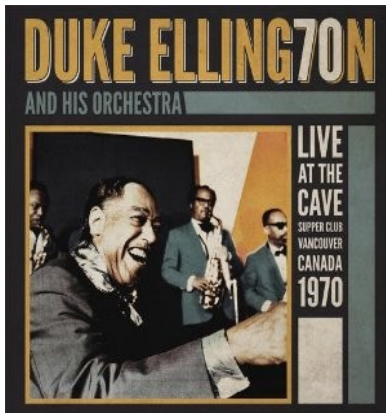
Squatty Roo Records (B00CA5MC3Q) Release date: June 18

According to the blog, *Villesville*, the original 2-LP's were poorly recorded bootlegs. Will digital wizardry compensate? No track listing available, either.

The following is the marketing description from pre-order online sources, offered without comment:

"Back in 1970, Duke

Ellington was at the threshold of a new sound. Yet again like so many times before, he was to take in his surroundings, musically and otherwise, and bring forth a new style for his musical instrument, his Famous Orchestra. Billy Strayhorn, his writing and



arranging companion was now dead, and the bulk of the writing was once again falling on Ellington's shoulders. Hammond Organ pioneer Wild Bill Davis took up some of the slack, as he became Duke's assistant arranger, but Ellington seems to know at this point, that pushing his own limits was needed. This outing documents the final days of star saxophonist Johnny Hodges. The setting is the Cave Theatre Restaurant in Vancouver, B.C., and the feeling is warm and intimate, but there is a decided edge to the feel of the music. The exotic power of drummer Rufus Jones is making a mark, and Ellington is about to bring us on his final journey through 'The Jungle' once again."

MERRY-GO-ROUND . . . by Ye Editor

We just returned from celebrating the 114th birth anniversary of Edward Kennedy Ellington at the foot of the street where he was born. Thanks to the **Friends of Francis Field** (West End Friends), the **DC Neighborhood Advisory Commission 2-A**, and the **DC Golden Triangle** for their fourth annual free concert with music by King James and the Serfs of Swing.

Undeterred by the gloomy weather, this neighborhood event took place in the triangular oasis of **Duke Ellington Park** at Ward Place and New Hampshire Ave., NW.

As West End Friends' **Gary Griffith** explained, "Duke's music is his best memorial. Having it played in a park designated in his honor makes it even better as something nice for the neighborhood."

DC City Councilman **Jack Evans** (who sponsored the legislation establishing the park) remarked on the proposal to install a statue of Duke in the triangle's center.

Also representing our Society was **Ted Hudson** to whom we were most grateful for legitimizing our presence.

Next year, we expect April 29 to be a glorious spring day so that the surrounding outdoor cafes are full, adding to the relaxed neighborhood atmosphere. City life at its best, indeed. But we had a lovely time today; when it comes to Ellington, how can one not?

We note the April 7 passing of pianist and educator, **Dwike Mitchell** at the age of 87. He was best known for his work with French horn artist, **Willie Ruff**. Billy Strayhorn wrote a piece for the Mitchell-Ruff Duo, "Suite for Horn and Piano," one of the few he composed for an artist other than Ellington. Mr. Mitchell's classical training, in our view, placed him in an artistically rarefied air for jazz pianists, along with **John Lewis** and **Don Shirley**.

Lack of space in the April issue prevented our grateful recognition of two of the most beautiful cats who ever walked the planet. **George Eigo**, bibliophile supreme, gifted us with the book, *Duke Ellington's Nutcracker Suite*, reviewed here last month.

In the same issue, the piece on the proposed film project for the book, *Riding Duke's Train* was brought to our attention by **Ed Klitsch** of Jazz Vespers San Francisco.

Recent discussions with respect to the original **Duke Ellington Study Group** in 1981 indicate that the existing authoritative written account remains **Melvin Saxton's** presentation at the 16th International Conference in Chicago on May 7, 1998. Fortunately, the paper can be accessed at the **Jazz Institute of Chicago** website: www.jazzinchicago.org

Mr. Saturday Dance reports that the **SMADA Market** (February 2013 issue) has relocated to the opposite side of the block on U St., NW—next to the Howard Theater, providing a westward backdrop for the stainless steel Duke sculpture. You can't make this up!

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

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

Among the many Jazz Appreciation Month events at the Smithsonian Institution was an April 9 presentation by **John Edward Hasse** entitled, "The Swinging Scions: How the Turkish Ambassador's Sons Jazzed Washington and the Nation." It focused on Ahmet and Nesuhi Ertegun and their pioneering work—in the 1930s and '40s--on behalf of jazz and racial integration in then rigidly-segregated Washington, DC, how it reverberated across America, and in what ways it led to Ahmet's founding and leading Atlantic Records, arguably the US's most important independent record label. A feature of the presentation was slides of Johnny Hodges, Lawrence Brown, and other Ellingtonians jamming at the Ambassador's residence.

As a postscript to his excellent program at the April meeting, **Ted Hudson** noted that two of our members appear in it: **Dennette Harrod** comments on the YMCA, Dunbar High School and the attractiveness of the young people therein. **Davey Yarborough**, of course talks about the Duke Ellington School of the Arts. Also, our recently joined **Gayle Pinderhughes** is the great niece of the owner of Thomas' Cafe where Duke played at a very young age. It happens to be the same venue where the very early photo was taken of him with one of the Conoway family, one of whom was Duke's partner in the sign painting business (which as we know, he soon abandoned for music).

Ted's name is listed in the acknowledgments at the end credits, and again with **Luvonia George** among those who "gathered important information through interviews."

Quotation of the Month: Doc Severinsen

Q: “In addition to Louis Armstrong, who are some of your favorites?”

A: Strangely enough, Duke Ellington. Tommy Newsom, who arranged a lot of the *Tonight Show* charts, and I both loved Duke Ellington. I said: ‘You love Ellington, and I love Ellington. Let’s make this an Ellington-sounding band.’ And that was the core of what we did.”

Ed. Note: We don't think that was in the least way strange. But to us, that band always had a Basie sound.

Answers to True or False (From Page 2.)

1. F, 2. F, 3. F, 4. T, 5. F, 6. T, 7. T, 8. T, 9. T, 10. T
 11. T, 12. F, 13. T, 14. F, 15. F, 16. T, 17. F, 18. T, 19. T, 20. F

**Our April meeting:
 Springtime in Duke Ellington’s Washington**
 by Art Luby, Secretary

A screening of the highly regarded PBS documentary, “Duke Ellington’s Washington” was the meeting’s focal point. The production traces Ellington’s roots to the U St., NW community - the cultural and artistic center for the District’s African American population from the early part of the 20th Century until the gradual end of *de jure* segregation after World War II. The U Street community stressed discipline, education, and dignified bearing. The documentary makes clear the connection between the values and style of this unique and historic community, and Ellington’s meticulous deportment and approach to his work.

What made the evening particularly interesting were the recollections of the Society members present who grew up around U Street and were familiar not only with the history, but also knew many of the people interviewed in the documentary.

The music was from our Society’s “Ellington ‘99” Conference project CD, *The Duke in Washington*. An April, 1955 performance at the Armory was significant for Duke’s generously allowing DC’s own, Rick Henderson to be out front on tenor sax for a robust bebop reading of “All the Things You Are”. This, Duke explained, was a *lagniappe* for the home folk.

2013 Dues still due? Please renew TODAY!
(It’ll be our secret . . .)

To Join or to Renew Membership

Please Send Your Payment to:

The Duke Ellington Society, Inc.

PO Box 29470, Washington, DC 20017, USA

Our dues remain a bargain:

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First-Time-Ever Member, Just \$20

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