



## THE DUKE ELLINGTON SOCIETY, CHAPTER 90

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# NEWSLETTER

Volume V, Number 6

JUNE 1997

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### **Youth Project Has Another Great Year, Attracts Interest of Institutions and Educators Nationally**

The concept of a multidisciplinary curriculum for use in school humanities education using resources of an archive devoted to a "jazz" musician was new in school and museum education when the Duke Ellington Youth Project was proposed in 1990 by Niani Kilkenny, Director of the Smithsonian's Program in African American Culture. Luvenia George became Coordinator of the Project, a joint enterprise of the Smithsonian and DC Public Schools.

Three April events — a Festival (instrumental and choral music and dance), a Poetry and Drama Program, and an Art Exhibit — publicly culminated the Project for this academic year, clearly demonstrating students' serious study as well as their artistic discipline and creativity. A fourth year-end activity will be the publication of an anthology of students' research and creative writing during the school year.

Mercedes Ellington, co-honorary chairperson with Rep. John Conyers, brought greetings to the Festival, at UDC on Thursday, April 25. By the evening's end the audience was on its feet, enthusiastically showing appreciation of the students' accomplishments. (Luvenia wrote the continuity for the Festival.) On Friday Ms. Ellington again did opening honors, this time at the Poetry and Drama Program held in the Carmichael Auditorium of the Smithsonian. Next morning the Art Exhibit formally opened there at the Taylor Gallery, at which time the Chapter's Logo Contest winners were awarded certificates and prizes.

#### ***Project Inspires Similar Efforts by Others***

While the Project's main focus is Ellingtonia, its curriculum involves foreign languages, English, government, history, etc. as well as drama, dance, and music, with the Ellington Archives serving as main resource center. Teachers can earn graduate academic credits for their participation.

The Project's success has generated interest in

### **June Meeting to Feature Duke's Washington Vocalists, Plus!**

by Mac Grimmer, Program Coordinator

Ted Shell will dip into his apparently bottomless barrel of Ellingtonia at our June meeting, playing excerpts from a couple of concerts of unusual interest. One is the Madison Square Garden concert that featured not only Duke's band, but also Louis Armstrong, B.B. King, Ray Charles, the MJQ, Joe Williams, and the two Davises, Sammy and Wild Bill, among others. What a line-up! The other concert is one of particular interest to Washingtonians, taped at Bolling Air Force Base with two of Duke's Washington vocalists, June Norton and Jimmy McPhail. This promises to be a fascinating evening.

The downbeat is at 8 pm, at our regular meeting place, **Grace Lutheran Church, 16th & Varnum Streets, NW on Saturday, June 7th.**

### **Nominations Committee Seeks Input**

With elections scheduled for our June meeting, our Nominations Committee is asking for suggestions for President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and seven At-Large Board Members. For your input, contact any Committee member: Jack Dennis, Chairperson (301-951-3580), Ben Allen, and Ben Pubols.

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education and museum circles around the country for example, the Henry Ford Museum, Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra, "Ellington '98," Kennedy Center, Indiana Music Educators Association, 18th and Vine Association, and, of course, school districts. Niani and Luvenia have been consulted and have traveled to explain the Project's concept, methodology, and academic results.

#### ***Award-Winning Education Kit Is***

#### ***Influenced by Project's Curriculum Guide***

Recently the Smithsonian's "Duke Ellington Education Kit," which used the Project's syllabus/curriculum as prototype, was awarded second place for design by the National Museum Association. (Ed. note: More about this later.)

## Ellington on the Internet

by Peter MacHare

The Internet, developed by the Department of Defense in the 1960s, is a global network of computer networks that allows people to communicate with each other and to share information resources.

You can use the Internet to communicate with people all over the world via e-mail or to make unlimited long distance and international telephone calls for free. You can read hundreds of newspapers from all over the world. You can read hundreds of books that are no longer protected by copyright. The complete works of Shakespeare, all the Greek tragedies, and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* are among the many works that you can find on the Internet in full text with illustrations.

The Internet is a vast marketplace. Many companies advertise their wares and you can order them right from your home PC. You can even use the Internet to buy a car.

The Vanity Press is now the Internet. You can set up a "homepage" on any subject you choose that anyone in the world with Internet access can visit.

The Internet contains rich graphics. You can find and keep beautiful color pictures of almost anything. Many Internet sites have pictures that move. Many Internet sites have sound. You can listen to Bugs Bunny, tonight's Baltimore Orioles game, or Duke Ellington.

A site maintained by Dusty Reagan, for example, and called simply **Duke Ellington** (<http://www.flash.net/~rdreagan/duke.shtml>), contains a short essay and sound files of "Satin Doll," "Jam-A-Ditty," and "Minnehaha." Software at one end converts the music to data. Software at your end converts the data back to music. Sound files are very large, so they take a great deal of computer memory and a long time to load.

There is an alternative to the difficulties presented by trying to send large files of music over the Internet. Voyager CD Link is free software that allows your Internet browser to access music CDs in your collection. A very charming use of the software is an essay on *The Blanton-Webster Band* by TDES member Loren Schoenberg (<http://www.voyagerco.com/cdlink/voyager2/ellington/ellington.html>). First you have to download and install the free software onto your PC. You then insert the first CD of *The Blanton-Webster Band* into the CD-ROM drive on your PC. While you read the essay by Schoenberg, you click on links that play the particular section of the piece that is being discussed. When Schoenberg, for example, discusses the last chord of "Blue Serge," the last chord is all you hear. *The Blanton-Webster Band* is the only Ellington CD that has been done this way, but we may hope for more in the future. Any volunteers?

Do you want to buy Ellington CDs over the Internet? Three vendors have particularly large Ellington selections. They are **CDnow** (<http://cdnow.com/>), **CDworld** (<http://gate.cdworld.com/>), and **CDland** (<http://www.cdland.com/>).

The quickest way to find information about Ellington on the Internet is to visit **The Edward Kennedy Ellington Pages** by David N. Smith (<http://www.dnsmith.com/ellington/>). This site is a collection of links to the best of Ellington on the Internet organized under the broad topics Recordings and Films, Books, Courses, Concerts, Sideman, and Other. If you click on all the links presented here, you will certainly find a great deal of information about Ellington. Don't forget to save all the pictures you come across so that you can use them yourself.

The largest Ellington site on the Internet is the **Ellington-Strayhorn Songbook** by Yoshioka Toshiya in Japan (<http://www2.meshnet.or.jp/~songbook/ellington-strayhorn/>). This site actually attempts to list all Ellington-Strayhorn compositions and all recordings of them. Recordings by Ellington are listed under the term Authentic Recordings. Recordings by others are listed as either Contemporary Recordings or Classical Recordings. Needless to say, such a large task can never be completed, but the site is always growing.

**Rude Interlude** belongs to Robb Holmes (<http://www.ilinks.net/~holmesr/duke.htm>). Three essays on Ellington are the heart of this site. A general essay on Duke is called "I Live With Music." There are two essays on Duke's recordings. The first covers through 1955. The second covers the rest of Ellington's career. The first essay contains the best explanation that I have ever read about why Ellington's singers were generally not as great as Ellington's musicians.

The **Billy Strayhorn** site (<http://www.billystrayhorn.com>) importantly includes descriptions of Strayhorn performance scores, the Billy Strayhorn Manuscript Editions. Among its other features are items about recordings of Strayhorn music.

(Continued on page 3 under "Internet")

## Duke Ellington and His World Famous Orchestra: The '46-'47 Recordings

(Hindsight HBCD-501; three CDs)

Reviewed by Ben Pubols

The sixty-four selections contained in this three-CD set originally appeared as radio broadcast transcriptions. They were issued commercially a number of years ago in a five-LP set. Happily they are now available on CD, recently made available at a discount to Society members through the good graces of TDES, New York City.

These performances were recorded for Capitol Transcriptions in seven sessions between March 28, 1946 and June 10, 1947. This was a transitional period for the orchestra, during which a number of major personnel changes took place. Two members of the "Old Guard" left in July, 1946 - Toby Hardwick retired from music and Tricky Sam Nanton died that month. Russell Procope joined the band and Harold Baker returned after a brief absence, both in 1946. More significant for these recordings was the presence of Oscar Pettiford, who had joined in late 1945, on bass, and Al Sears, who had joined in 1944, on tenor sax. This was not the Blanton-Webster band, but a good case could be made for calling it the Pettiford-Sears band, for these two are the stars of the show here. When not soloing, Pettiford drives the band mightily, and Sears contributes strongly to the sax section sound. Others who shine brightly include old-timers Johnny Hodges, Harry Carney, and Lawrence Brown, and relative newcomers Ray Nance, Harold Baker, and Jimmy Hamilton.

Many of the items contained in this set were released commercially (Victor, Musicraft) around the time these transcriptions were cut); in other cases these are the only known recordings. Among the highlights for this reviewer are "Tip Toe Topic," an Ellington-Pettiford duet, "The Jeep Is Jumpin'" with Pettiford and Hodges, Hodges on "Magenta Haze" and "Violet Blue," Carney on "Sono," Sears and Pettiford on "9:20 Special" and "Swamp Fire," Taft Jordan, Carney, Brown and Hamilton on "Jam-A-Ditty," and Cat Anderson and Sears on "A Gathering In A Clearing." Kay Davis is heard as lyricless soprano in her well-known vocalese "Transblucency," and also in a not-so-familiar role as lyrical contralto on "Come Rain Or Come Shine" and "Embraceable You." Finally, don't miss really swinging versions of "Happy-Go-Lucky Local," "Blue Is The Night," and "One O'Clock Jump," the latter with Duke sounding like Basie, Sears sounding like Prez, and Brown, Hodges, and Baker as themselves.

Overall, the band was well recorded, with a crisp sound, the rhythm section, especially Pettiford, coming through loud and clear. The band swings! Liner notes by Patricia Willard, from the original LP release, are lucid and informative. The set is highly recommended!

### Internet *(Continued from page 2)*

The heart of TDES' brand new page (<http://duke.fuse.net/duke.html>) is 11 sound files presently concentrating on vocalists. There are also some short essays taken from CD liner notes and a nice section on Billy Strayhorn. The graphics, however, are a bit overdone.

A **Duke Ellington Panorama** by Peter MacHare (<http://www.nicom.com/~machare/>) is something of a mini-Timner. It is a very thorough index to about 125 Ellington CDs that are in the author's collection. There is a sessionography by decade that lists recording date, location, personnel, title, composer, vocalist, label, and matrix number for each recording. There are also alphabetical indices by title and by vocalist. There are pages devoted to each of the three upcoming Ellington conferences that are updated as new information is released. Finally the site inexplicably contains a very fine martini recipe. The author's view upon the question of whether a lemon twist or an olive is the proper decoration for a martini is most peculiar. I urge you to see for yourself.

Does all this make you want to explore? To get on the Internet, you need a modern PC with a fast modem. Then you need to subscribe to a service that provides access. Local Internet service providers do just as good a job as the big companies that advertise on TV and are far cheaper. Expect to pay around \$10 a month for unlimited usage with no restrictions. You'll do best if you subscribe to a service that allows you to use either Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer to access the Internet. *Ed. note: This article, for which we thank Peter, is a follow-up of his fine presentation at our May 3 meeting.*

### Quotation of the Month

On the day Saint Peter stamps my hand at the Gates of Heaven, the first thing I'll want to hear is The Fourth Sacred Concert.

*-- Peter MacHare on his "A Duke Ellington Panorama" Website*

## "*Dramatis Felidae*"

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

About the Cats and Kittens in Our Chapter

♪ ♪ The creative work of Margaret Westley-Williams, 7th grade student at Hardy Middle School and daughter of Donald Williams, is displayed in the Duke Ellington Youth Project's Art Exhibition at the Smithsonian. ♪ ♪ In the Preface to his *Jammin' at the Margins: Jazz and the American Cinema*, Krin Gabbard thanks John Hasse, Morris Hodara, Ted Hudson, Anne [Annie] Kuebler, and Jerry Valburn for their advice and help while the book was in manuscript form. Among those who "generously devoted time to reading through the entire manuscript and then told me what was wrong and what could be fixed," Krin names Walter van de Leur. ♪ ♪ New member Joseph "Tex" Gathings was the first full-time disc jockey of color in the area to play jazz exclusively (WINX in the late 1940s); later he was the first to manage a commercial station (WYOU in Newport News). Tex entered academia around 1970, retiring a several years ago from UDC where he was Associate Dean for Liberal and Fine Arts. ♪ ♪ Helen Frazier tells us that Helen Freeman, a regular guest at our annual holiday parties and a dear friend of hers, died recently. ♪ ♪

## Remember Those Jazz Venues?

Mac Grimmer has released a preliminary compilation of Washington area "Jazz Joints - Then & Now." Let's help by sending comments, additions, and corrections to him: by snail-mail at 213 - 8th Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003; by e-mail at agrimmer@erols.com; or by phone at 202-546-7764.

## Play On! Gets Favorable Reviews

Having premiered successfully in San Diego before going on to Broadway, *Play On!*, the blend—with artistic license—of Shakespeare literature and Ellington-Strayhorn music, is getting praise in New York media. A May release of an original-cast CD has been announced.

## Calendar

*Saturday, June 7* - Regular Monthly Meeting

*April 26-June 2* - Art Exhibit, Ellington

Youth Project, Taylor Gallery, NMAH

*May 22-26* - "Ellington '97," Leeds, England

## May Meeting: Internet Explained

by Angela Grimmer, Secretary

Peter MacHare, our resident expert on cyberspace, gave a stunning demonstration of this latest technological development at last month's meeting. Peter was prepared with handouts of the Duke Ellington sites on the internet, which are multiplying almost as fast as the internet itself—a convincing demonstration of its awesome size and scope. He also showed us some of the jazz pages, with their many links, which, followed one after another, could lead one on a labyrinthian journey through the endless wilds of cyberspace.

Intertwined with the internet was Peter's program on *The Private Collection*. Many of the songs featured Paul Gonsalves, who has a major role in the 10-CD set, and who takes solos usually assigned to others on the standard recordings. Exciting material, not released during Duke's lifetime. An interesting and informative evening.

## You'll Read All about "Ellington '97"

As he did last year for the Conference in Toronto, for members unable to make the trip to Leeds, Ben Pubols has accepted responsibility for covering "Ellington '97" for our *Newsletter*. Thanks, Ben.

## We're No Longer Generic:

### Bill Gray Names Us

You will recall that in a previous issue we asked if we should have a name for our publication other than simply *Newsletter*. Response, though limited, was affirmative. Of the proffered titles, several were already in use. The last, it coming from Bill Gray, was by no means the least. With his blessing, it was amended just a taste, the result being [*Watch for it in a forthcoming issue!*]. We thank Bill and others for their cooperation.

### Chapter 90 Board of Directors

Patricia Braxton	Helen Frazier
Angela Grimmer	Mac Grimmer
Rusty Hassan	Theodore Hudson
Ben Pubols	Bob Reny
Theodore Shell	Jack Towers
Patricia Willard	

## Last Minute News --

*Bad:* When he fell coming into our May meeting, Jack Towers suffered a couple of cracked ribs.  
*Good:* He expects to be able to travel to the Conference in Leeds. You have our best wishes, Jack.