

Ellingtonia



Newsletter of the Washington, D.C.
Duke Ellington Society

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Theodore R. Hudson, Editor

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Latest on Who Arranged "Azure"

Recently, a rather dated question was reincarnated: Who arranged the "Azure" that Ellington played and recorded, he or Joe Lippman, who arranged for Bunny Berigan and others? In a full article in the latest *DEMS Bulletin*, Ben Pubols persuasively, and more importantly, convincingly provides sound musical analysis, an excerpted copy of a music manuscript, and other evidence that it was Duke. He ends by pointing out that the question about who arranged it "raises the broader question of the line between composing and arranging. Where does one draw the line?" As to "Azure," he declares, "Duke was a composer—in his case the arrangement is inseparable from the composition."

Dear Fellow Members

As we well know, our Washington Duke Ellington Society will host Ellington '99, the 17th Annual International Duke Ellington Conference, April 28-May 2, 1999 in celebration of his 100th birthday. We estimate that 400 enthusiasts from all over the world will register for the conference.

Our society is non-profit, and is actively seeking financial support to absorb some of the cost of producing this event. We also hope to contribute to several local and national programs to assist students in the study of Ellingtonia and/or jazz.

We ask each and every one of our members to help. If you are able to identify possible sources of individual, company, or corporate support, especially among your friends or associates, please contact me at 202-543-2975, or any other member of our Ellington '99 Coordinating Committee. We have fundraising packets ready for your review.

We look forward to your participation!

— Aledra Allen, Fundraising Chairperson

October Program: Blowin' at the Hurricane

by Mac Grimmer, Program Coordinator

Tired of doing one-nighters under the restrictions of wartime travel, in the spring of 1943, for the first time in five years Ellington had a chance to settle down for an extended engagement in New York. Even more important, the Hurricane, at 49th & Broadway, had nightly broadcasts, which provided Duke with his first regular radio exposure since the early days at the Cotton Club. Many of these broadcasts survive and are important musical documents of the period, coming right in the middle of the recording ban of 1942-44. This was a period of transition for the band, and the broadcasts give us a chance to hear them at length, as well as the new singer, Betty Roché, who missed out on many recording opportunities because of the ban. Another singer, Al Hibbler, joined the band during the Hurricane engagement, as did Taft Jordan and Jimmy Hamilton (who stayed until 1968).

These broadcasts provided wide exposure and publicity at a difficult time in a country disrupted and distracted by the war, and after the Hurricane engagement there was renewed interest in the band—their fee at least tripled.

Jack Towers has selected some interesting examples of the Hurricane broadcasts for the October program, including many unique and otherwise undocumented performances of this "lost" period in the Ellington discography.

The time is 8 PM, Saturday, October 3, at our regular meeting place, Grace Lutheran Church, 16th & Varnum Sts, NW.

We won't see Duke being lowered to the bandstand from the ceiling, playing piano on a satin-draped elevator platform, as he was at the Hurricane, but we can imagine that—and more—as we listen to it on the radio!

Affecting the Ellington Effect

by Reuben Jackson

During the mid to late 1970s' heyday of pro football's Dallas Cowboys, there was a saying that went something like this: "The road to the Super Bowl leads through Dallas." I mention this not because, as a lifelong Washingtonian, I wish to see our dastardly rivals regain their crown and/or their arrogant swagger, but because it seems that more and more scholars, fans, etc. of Edward Kennedy Ellington's music are finding out that "The road to 20th century musical excellence leads through Ellingtonia."

And while it is clear from (for example) recent works by the likes of trumpeter Wynton Marsalis (note especially his Pulitzer Prize-winning extended work *Blood on the Fields*) that the evocative and sensual tonal mastery associated with "The Ellington Effect" continues to entrance composers and their audiences, it is also interesting to note that Ellington's still undervalued method of writing for the individuals in the ensemble has resonated not only in US-based aggregations, but in those around the globe.

This was especially evident when, during a recent bout with influenza, I finally got around to reading *Chris McGregor and the Brotherhood of Breath* (Bamberg Books), a 1995 biography/memoir of the noted South African pianist-composer-bandleader, written by his wife, Maxine. McGregor is probably best known not for the aggregation whose name forms the book's title, but for The Blue Notes, a sextet of fellow South African exiles such as saxophonist Dudu Pukwana and trumpeter Mongezi Feza, which fused the infectious rhythms heard in the South African townships with what would eventually be called "avant garde" jazz, and as so frequently noted in excerpts from interviews with McGregor, compositions which, like Ellington, highlighted the talents of the aforementioned soloists, and adventuresome ensemble voicings in the spirit, if not the letter, of the Maestro.

In the book's introduction, Dennis Constant-Martin notes that "Melodically, Christ McGregor has two main sources of inspiration, Duke Ellington, and South Africa." And as we all know, throughout his career Ellington consistently explored (thematically and musically) what Fats Waller referred to as "The African Ripple."

And though it is difficult to find recordings featuring the Blue Notes, who broke up from lack of steady work in the late 1960s, two recordings featuring the Brotherhood, 1994's *Live at Willisau* (Ogun Records) and 1998's *Country Cooking* (Virgin Records), feature talented McGregor interpreters like trombonist Annie Whitehead (the title track of the latter date), the poorly recorded *Willisau* nonetheless points out how effective McGregor incorporated Ellington's sighing ensemble methodology amidst the now squalling, now reflective work of Pukwana, whose tonal presence was often compared to Johnny Hodges, and who died shortly after McGregor in 1990, and Feza, whose 1975 demise affected McGregor greatly.

Even if one is less than fond of the overtly avant garde influences present in, say, "Davashe's Dream" (*Live at Willisau*), wherein The Brotherhood's collective screams share the air with more conventionally scored notation, the manner in which each player's imprint essays these passages is evidence of McGregor's love for, and belief in, Ellington's approach, which according to trombonist Whitehead, even extended (subconsciously?) to McGregor's extremely laid-back disciplinary "style."

There are, I think, even more interesting parallels between Ellington and McGregor, some of which I hope to present to the Ellington Society at a future meeting. Hopefully, this "intro" whets the reader's appetite, and further illustrates the Maestro's ever-fecund legacy.

Ellington Youth Project Launches Ninth Year

by Luvenia George, Project Coordinator

The Duke Ellington Youth Project will begin its 1998-99 academic year with a Teachers Workshop on September 19 in the Smithsonian's beautiful Hall of Music Instruments. Reuben Jackson, Ellington archivist and well known poet, will inform and inspire Project teachers with a stimulating presentation in his inimitable way.

The Workshop provides teachers with curriculum and support materials, details on activities for the year, and an opportunity to interact with museum staff and Ellington experts. Teachers can earn both recertification and graduate credit for Project participation. We are looking forward to an extraordinary season as the Duke Ellington Youth Project enters its ninth year, which will culminate in a celebration of his 100th birthday with others all over the world, and especially in Washington, DC.

There are many exciting plans for our participation in the Centennial, and we will keep the Society posted and up-to-date as events materialize. Our young people, the Ellington music lovers of the present, and the international Duke Ellington Society members of the future, are looking forward to continued support!

"Royalty Comes to Chicago"

The 16th Annual International Duke Ellington Study Group Conference

Illuminating oral presentations, excellent performances of Ellington and Strayhorn music, and a richness of related events marked Ellington '98 in Chicago in May.

The conference was conceived and organized by Josie Childs and Miriam Ewing, widow of Gordon Ewing, one of founders of the Duke Ellington Study Group. The annual conferences evolved from several informal meetings beginning in 1981 with 11 enthusiasts who constituted the Study Group. The first formal conference, in 1983, was hosted by our own Washington Ellington Society.

The opening ceremony of Ellington '98 featured Gwendolyn Brooks, a Pulitzer prize winner, Poet Laureate of the State of Illinois, and former Consultant in Poetry at the Library of Congress (a position now designated Poet Laureate of the United States). Ms. Brooks had composed a poem for the occasion, which she read to the appreciative audience.

Immediately following were short presentations. Miriam Ewing welcomed all and made a brief tribute to her late husband. Melvin Saxon, one of the founders, spoke of the original Study Group meetings, and Tim Black recalled growing up in Chicago as one of many youths who regarded Duke as a role model because of his elegance, eloquence, and accomplishments.

My People Engagingly Re-created

A high point of Ellington '98 was the revival of Ellington and Strayhorn's 1963 *My People*, this time at the New Regal Theatre. Very few at the conference had seen the original, so in addition to enhancing their appreciation of available recorded music, this performance—through set, choreography, costume, spectacle, and narration—provided appreciation of the visual effects and thematic dimensions of the production.

David Baker conducted the orchestra and Robert Morris, choir arranger for the 1963 production, directed the choral group. A special treat was the guest appearance by Joya Sherrill, who was in the original and whose voice is as lovely as ever. Duke's granddaughter Mercedes Ellington, who directed the choreography, made

an all-too-brief appearance as narrator-commentator.

The performance was complemented by day sessions relating to the original *My People*. One of the stimuli for further consideration of its ramifications beyond the music and original staging was "The Political and Cultural Significance of *My People*" by Joseph McLaren of Hofstra University. In another presentation, Robert Morris, a student at the time of the original production, recalled his work with the choral group and how generously Duke had accepted his suggestions and treatment of the music.

Local Experts Make Presentations

Several persons from our area were major speakers—John Edward Hasse, Reuben Jackson, and Deborra Richardson. Also, Ben Pubols gave an overview of Ellington '99 and distributed preliminary conference and tourist information. (Teddy Hudson was erroneously listed on the program with him.)

Deborra in her "Three Lovely Ladies of Song"—Kay Davis, Maria Ellington (who became Mrs. Nat "King" Cole), and Joya Sherrill—discussed the friendship that blossomed among them, their musicianship and family backgrounds, and the prevailing attitudes toward women and musicianship during the 1940s, when they were with the Ellington orchestra at the same time. Her lecture, supplemented by audio-visual media, was followed by a panel consisting of Davis, Sherrill, and another ex-Ellington vocalist, Dolores Parker, who, fortunately, was at the conference. The three exhibited natural charm, warmth, and grace that assuredly must have complemented Duke's manner.

In his "Ellington and Hendrix," Reuben proffered insights into technical affinities and predilections as well as elements common in the lives and personalities of Jimi Hendrix and Duke—two on-the-surface dissimilar musicians. He invited listeners to speculate about what would have happened musically had the two collaborated or performed together, as, indeed, rumor at one time averred was in the conceptual stage.

John also had a evocative topic, "The Ellington Canon," a thoughtful undertaking. After carefully defining the term "canon" as used in his investigation as the most esteemed recordings, he explained his methodology, which involved five referents: lists derived from inclusions by critics/historians/writers, recordings, pedagogy, published transcriptions, and recreatory/repertory performances. Throughout, he noted variables inherent in such a study. The resulting canon he characterized as the "Front-Runners Thus Far."

Talks Are Richly Varied

Oral presentations covering additional facets of Ellingtonia were likewise informed and engaging. Among them were technical analyses of Ellington's and Strayhorn's art, in language suitable for lay persons. During a panel moderated by Samuel Floyd, Jr., Mark Tucker and Hale Smith discussed and demonstrated Ellington's piano technique. Luther Henderson, who worked with Duke and Strayhorn on various projects, spoke on "Duke the Composer." Gunther Schuller, supplementing his lecture with music and visuals, revealed much about the ingenuity in "Daybreak Express," "Mood Indigo," "Azure," and "Reminiscing in Tempo." Dick Buckley's exposition was on "Duke and the Blues," while William Russo's, illustrated by live music, was on the "Evolution of Ellington." Kenny Burrell, who has taught an Ellington course at UCLA for years, in a role reversal, spoke of what taking such a course means from the perspective of the student. A personal reminiscence by Sathima Bea Benjamin included her first meeting and recording with Duke and Strayhorn.

Chicago: "Home" and Catalyst for Jazz Idiom

In keeping with the conference theme, "Royalty [read Ellington] Comes to Chicago," special attention was directed to the city's importance to Duke, to jazz history in general, and to its sons and daughters who have contributed to America's classic music, especially as Ellingtonians.

A pre-conference tour included places of special significance to conference attenders. Some remain but with no suggestion of their glory days, for example, the Grand Terrace ballroom; some are streets that now honor

musicians, for example, a thoroughfare named for Muddy Waters; some are now vacant lots, for example, the site of the original Regal Theater. The tour made three stops—at the South Side Community Arts Center, where there were exhibited rare photographs of "Ellington and His Men"; at the famous Wendell Phillips High School, whose alumni include the likes of Nat Cole, Milt Hinton, and Ray Nance; and at the DuSable Museum, where the group was given a brief tour and shown a history video.

In addition to the opening program, several day sessions stressed the significance of Chicago in jazz history as well as in the personal and professional lives of Ellington and Strayhorn. In her "Early Chicago and Duke," Jean Bach recalled, first hand, recording sessions by Duke. Noting that Duke, as did a number of his band members, felt at "home" in Chicago, Phil Schaap in his "Small Band Recordings in Chicago," posed an intriguing issue, the impact of "place" in musicians' performances.

Music, Music, Music...

Music was pervasive, beginning with the New Groove Band led by Carl Wooley at the opening reception. The next night, conferees were bused to Joe's BeBop Café at the Navy Pier, for dinner and spirited Ellington and Strayhorn music by the Rockin' in Rhythm band.

On Thursday afternoon the conference venue shifted to nearby Harold Washington Library for an inspiring program by Chicago Public School students. Considering this and the pre-*My People* performance by the Down Beat Jazz Ensemble, one may assuredly say that the future for America's classic music is promising.

Preceding *My People* at the New Regal Theater, the audience was delighted by a short concert by the Down Beat Jazz Ensemble, an educational outreach program for high school students. One, Ginny Anderson, earned a rousing ovation for her outstanding alto saxophone solo on "Prelude to a Kiss," complete with Hodges glisses and flutter notes, and seemed genuinely surprised to have been appreciated so enthusiastically. After the show itself, the conferees were taken to a special reception at the elegantly stately South Shore Cultural Center where Ellingtonians Butch Ballard, Aaron Bell, Bill Berry, Buster Cooper, and Britt Woodman, joined by tenor saxophonist Ed Johnson and a guest bassist, played for

listening and dancing (inspiring impromptu fast and fancy footwork by Phil Schaap, first with Janna Steed and then our Geneva Hudson).

More great live music by the Chicago Jazz Ensemble was a part of William Russo's "Evolution of Ellington" presentation on Saturday morning. That afternoon Ellington alumni again delighted listeners, this time performing with the DePaul University Jazz Ensemble. Clearly, they were in top form and enjoying reciprocal inspiration.

On Saturday night Ellington '98 was the guest of Jazz Unites, Inc. at a reception followed by their 21st Annual Tribute to Duke Ellington, starring Jeff Lindberg's excellent Jazz Members Big Band, the Andy Bey Trio, and the Jimmy Smith Quartet.

Sunday morning's music was appropriately spiritual, "A Tribute to Duke Ellington and Ray Nance" by a large string ensemble, Lisa Terry and Friends, including narration and performance by Kenny Burrell.

"We Had Church And Duke Was the Preacher"

In a too brief commentary on the implications of the Duke Ellington-Mahalia Jackson collaboration, Studs Terkel asserted that if Bessie Smith had sung sacred music she would have sounded like Mahalia, and, conversely, if Mahalia had sung secular music she would have sounded like Bessie.

In what could have been a homily, the Rev. Janna Steed explored the theology in "Come Sunday," pointing out that it suggests the Sermon on the Mount as recorded in the Gospel according to Matthew and that its weariness resolves in hope and a sense "of being known and loved by the Creator of all..." In analyzing "Black and Tan Fantasy" as a crossover of the secular and sacred, she noted that through it Duke (as does Proust in his prose) "shows what lies hidden in the darkness of our souls." Janna also mentioned that, significantly, the original title of "Meditation" was "Just One Big Question."

Pervasive Strayhorn

While the annual meetings are under the rubric of Ellington, much attention is always focused on the life and art of Billy Strayhorn. This one was no exception, for one cannot think of the Ellington legacy/corpus without thinking

of Billy as integral as well as brilliant artist in his own right. There were performances of his music, notes about his personal and professional ties to Chicago, and allusions to and analysis of to his composing and arranging talents.

One session, "The Billy Strayhorn Project," was narrated by Billy's niece Alyce Claerbaut. Music for the presentation was by the Gene Esposito Septet, with arrangements by its leader. The conference program reports that Esposito, known as a Strayhorn advocate for years, "has performed several concerts of Strayhorn's music and is currently writing a multi-media stage presentation which will depict the life and music of Billy Strayhorn."

We Were There!

As usual for the annual conferences, our Ellington Society was well represented at this year's conference, including Patricia Willard, Marion and Ted Shell, Ben Pubols, Geneva and Teddy Hudson, Morris Hodara, Angela and Mac Grimmer, Richard Firda, Betty and Jack Dennis. Patricia Braxton, and Liz Braxton. Our members from foreign countries included Dave Fleming and Dennis Dimmer from Great Britain, Lois Moody and John Hornsby from Canada, and Milia and Sjef Hoefsmit from Belgium.

Conference Grace Notes

♪ Two persons were acknowledged for having attended all of the 16 conferences. We are proud to say that both are members of our Society, Morris Hodara and Patricia Willard. We have several who have missed only one conference: Jack Towers, Ted Shell, Ted Hudson, and Sjef Hoefsmit. This one-conference-missed group is now joined by Ulysses LaPradde, conspicuously absent from this one. ♪ Kenny Burrell, a Conference presenter, was performing at a club in town, where a number of persons went to see him. After one set, Gören Wallén, from Sweden, presented him with an Ellington pin, which Kenny graciously accepted. ♪ The Strayhorns clearly hold the record for the number of family members attending the conferences. This year 15, yes 15, came. One of Billy's nieces, Alyce Claerbaut, was on the host committee and, as stated above, led a day session. ♪ The lineup of presenters was rich in expertise and of high reputation, many not heard at previous

meetings, for example: Benjamin, Black, Floyd, Russo, Smith, and Terkel. ♪ John Watson, a trombonist who soloed with such spirit and assurance in the Carl Wooley and Rockin' in Rhythms groups, is also an actor. He played the part of the reclusive uncle in the movie *Soul Food*. ♪

Presence of Founding Members Evokes History of Conferences

Six of the original eleven Duke Ellington Study Group founders were at Ellington '98: Dick Buckley, Don Miller, Melvin Saxon, Jack Towers, Gunther Schuller, and Jerry Valburn. Two, Gordon Ewing and Joe Igo, are deceased. The other three—John Steiner, Henry Quarles, and Dick Wang—were not present. Schuller, Saxon, and Buckley were presenters at this year's conference.

There has been some confusion about how the annual conferences came about. A small group of Ellington enthusiasts came together in May 1981 in Chicago to discuss common interests and research projects. Hearing that Schuller would be in town, they invited him to this first meeting and he came. The Group met again in October, this time in Valburn's basement in Plainview, NY. They were joined by several others, among whom were Charles Delauny from France and Benny Åslund from Sweden. The next year they caucused at the IAJRC convention in Detroit, at which time they decided that it would be a good idea to hold a formal conference. Jack Towers volunteered, with our Society's approval, to have us host this first one the next year.

Thus, although the 1983 conference was sponsored by our Washington Ellington Society, the series was not started (nor has it later been coordinated) by the so-called Ellington society "chapters." Succeeding conferences have been hosted by several entities: Interested groups or committees held conferences in Oldham, England (1985 and 1988), Ottawa, Canada (1990), Copenhagen, Denmark (1992), and Leeds, England (1997). The then newly formed Strayhorn Society sponsored the conference in his hometown, Pittsburgh (1995). Two foreign Societies have been sponsors: Toronto, Canada (1987 and 1996) and Stockholm, Sweden (1994). Ellington societies in the United States that have had the conferences are, in order of their first hosting, Washington (1983 and 1989), Chicago

(1984 and 1998), New York (1986 and 1993), and Southern California (1991).

Of course, all of the sponsors, formally organized and ad hoc, have cooperated and supported each other admirably, as one of the Duke Ellington Study Group founders, Don Miller, has been wont to declaim, "All for the love of Duke!"

Ellington '98 Was a City Event As Well as a Conference

It seemed as if all of Chicago was well aware of, supportive, and involved in Ellington '98. For instance, Jazz Unite's annual tribute had its venue changed to the conference hotel's Grand Ballroom, clubs and other places of music entertainment focused on Ellington and Strayhorn music, some extending special prices to conference badge-wearing patrons; newspapers and other print media and television and radio gave good coverage; the city's Department of Cultural Affairs staged a series of happenings, beginning with Duke's birthday in April; schools had special observances.

All of which point to excellent vision, planning, and loving labor by Josie Childs, Miriam Ewing, and their co-workers.

Take a "Big One" [Bow], Chicago!

We are grateful and heartily congratulate all concerned for a full and, indeed, festive Ellington '98, the 16th Annual International Duke Ellington Study Group Conference!

Conference Souvenirs Available

Josie Childs writes that many persons have inquired about memorabilia. While supplies last some are available, as follows:

- . Banner hanging on street launching Duke's 100th birthday (one side Duke's top hat photo, other side the *My People* logo, with Conference dates, etc. on both sides) — \$100.
- . Poster of Duke at age 4 — \$20 each, 2 for \$35.
- . Historical *My People* souvenir program — \$7.
- . Conference tote bag — \$12.50.

Make your check payable to:

Ellington '98
6935 So. Crandon Avenue, 2D
Chicago, IL 60649

Short Sheets . . .

At its August "Suite Sixteen Plus Six" concert in DC, the the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra presented compositions by Ellington and/or Strayhorn. It was the first in their series "Duke Ellington: 100 Years, 100 Masterworks," in celebration of the centennial of his birth. ♪ ♪ Yes, the poem "Early in the City" that you've seen in subway stations and on Metrobuses is by multi-talented Reuben Jackson, known best to us as Ellington Collection archivist at the Smithsonian. His poem was chosen for the Metro Muse series, a culture-enhancing activity of the transportation system. ♪ ♪ John Edward Hasse's "The Sound of Surprise" appears in the magazine *International Gallerie*. Also, he wrote the Basie article for *Encarta '98 Encyclopedia*. ♪ ♪ The famous Scurlock Collection of photographs has been acquired by the Smithsonian, whose Research Resources Program has granted \$10,000 for freezer storage processing of some of the negatives that need to be stabilized. ♪ ♪ The Southern California DES is already gearing up for Ellington 2000. According to its bulletin, president Bill Hill has given each board member "a 16-page manual outlining all the tasks to be performed and decisions to be made . . ." ♪ ♪ In May of next year, the Baltimore Symphony will present the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra in "An Ellington Tribute."

Concert To Be Recorded for CD

We have been told that a duo consisting of Sir Roland Hanna and our Davey Yarborough will be recorded in a concert at the Montpelier Arts Center in Laurel on October 9. The resulting CD is planned for release on April 30, the day after Duke's centennial birthdate.

Want to Know What's In the Duke Ellington Collection?

The Finding Aid for the 16 series, or groupings of material, in the Smithsonian's Ellington Collection is available on the internet. For each series, there is a container list of contents. Related collections, such as that donated by our Ted Shell, also have Finding Aids that can be accessed. Especially for persons intending to visit the Archives to examine holdings, previewing the Finding Aid on the internet can save valuable time. The Ellington Collection's web address is: www.si.edu/organiza/museums/nmah/archives/d5301.htm

SMJO Initiates Educational Programs

The Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra has developed educational outreach projects for kindergarten through college and adulthood. Topics for the various programs include what jazz is and isn't, the evolution of jazz styles, Ellington's life and art, instruments and techniques of jazz performance, and pre-concert lectures. For musicians there are master classes, clinics for students and for music teachers, and coaching of instrumental students. Persons wanting more information may call: 202-633-9163; fax: 202-633-9176; e-mail: zimmerman@nmah.si.edu; or visit the orchestra's web site: www.si.edu.

Hear Herb

by Bob Reny

For collectors of our friend Herb Jeffries, Sony (Special Products) issued a collection titled *The 4 Winds and the 7 Seas* (Sony CD A28452). Originally released in 1987, it has 10 selections with Jeffries backed by different groups—Hugo Winterhalter, Bobby Hackett Quartet, Mitch Miller, Jerry Gray, Glenn Osser, Harry Zimmerman, and George Wyte—all recorded as singles in 1949-50. Selections include "Count Every Star," "If I Should Lose You," "It's Easy to Remember," "There Goes My Heart," and the title track. Herb's in good voice and the sound is satisfactory—digitally re-mastered from the original analog sides.

Momentum Invites Suggestions Regarding Its New Direction

Billy Strayhorn Songs, Inc. has temporarily ceased production of its periodical. A recent communication states that ". . . Ellington '95 provided a basis to continue promoting the Strayhorn renaissance in a tangible way. *Momentum* was first established as a family newsletter, consisting mainly of information about Strayhorn events, thereby enabling family support." However, Ellington societies became interested; in turn, "their friends who were musicians, scholars, educators, etc. heard about [it] and became interested in receiving it also. This was both to our liking and surprise. As a consequence, we are taking the opportunity to review the publication in light of its real potential." Comments and ideas are encouraged. Send them to or request a reader survey form from: A. Alyce Claerbaut, 5328 N. Sawyer, 2-S, Chicago, IL 60625; fax: 773-583-1261; e-mail: Gregory573@aol.com.

"Dramatis Felidae"

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

Stopping by London enroute, **Aledra Allen** traveled to Glasgow for the Annual Scotland International Jazz Festival. She has been making this festival for several years now. ♪ ♪ Congratulations to Sarah and **Scott Schwartz** on the latest addition to their family, Kathryn Elizabeth (Kit). And **Patricia Willard** is beaming, being the grandmother of baby Chloe. ♪ ♪ **Lois Moody** and **Walter van de Leur** have items in the "Anorak Corner" of *Blue Light*. Both **Hudsons** have contributions in the current *DEMS Bulletin*. On the front cover is a wonderful color photo by **Geneva** of Dolores Parker, Kay Davis, and Joya Sherrill at Ellington '98. **Teddy's** tribute to Jimmy McPhail includes a photo of Jimmy that he took at the First International Ellington Study Group Conference, in Washington in 1983. ♪ ♪ Our **Jack Ladd Carr**, who is on the Board of Directors for the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra, is pleased that its new conductor, Leslie Dunner, has expressed interest in performing some Ellington/Strayhorn music in one of its concert series. In August, Dunner conducted the Washington National Symphony at a Carter Barron concert that included Duke's *The River*. Afterwards, Ted and Geneva Hudson and Ben and Lillian Pubols were escorted backstage by Jack, who introduced them to the maestro. ♪ ♪ The cover of the Potomac River Jazz Society's August issue of *Tailgate Ramblings* is graced by a photograph of its oldest member (and ours, too, we think), **Harold Gray**, with two sons. Harold recently attended a reunion of 82 family members in Missouri. ♪ ♪

Homzy to Direct International Band In Celebration of Duke's Birthday

Assuring that he will be with us "in spirit as well as musically," Andrew Homzy informs that he will not be able to attend Ellington '99. An e-mail from him states that "Radio-Canada has asked [him] to direct an international band (assembled through the European Broadcasting Union) celebrating Duke's 100th birthday on April 29, 1999. It will be a free concert at Montreal's Spectrum, broadcast and telecast internationally, and issued as a double CD."

Andrew has selected trumpeter Charles Ellison and alto saxophonist Dave Turner to be the two musicians allotted from Montreal. Other band members will be selected from EBU member countries.

June Meeting Features Music from Never Completed Williams Project

by Angela Grimmer, Secretary

At our June meeting, just before our summer break, Jack Towers was able to play about half of the *Seventy Masterpieces* that Martin Williams selected for a never-completed Smithsonian Project. There was a printed hand-out for members in attendance listing the 70, with comments on the selections Jack played extracted from the writings of Williams and from Gunther Schuller, Mark Tucker, and Doug Richards, who assisted in making the choices. (Anyone not in attendance who would like to receive a copy, let us know and we will forward same.) This was an evening of the cream of Ellingtonia, and as in one of the writings, the recordings conveyed "originality as fresh and timeless today as it was (then)."

Our musical evening was interrupted by the business part of the meeting, with Jack Dennis, chairman of the nominating committee (giving his usual sterling performance), presiding over the selection of officers and the board of directors, with results as listed elsewhere in this newsletter.

Light Side (From the Internet, With Only Halfhearted Apologies)

Q. How many bass players does it take to change a light bulb? A. None. They let the pianist do it with his left hand.

Q. How many critics does it take to change a light bulb? A. None. They work in the dark.

Calendar

Sept. 26&27 - SJMO Concerts, Lincoln Theater

Oct.3 - Society's Regular Monthly Meetings Resume

Oct.9 - Yarborough-Hanna Concert, Montpelier Cntr.

DUKE ELLINGTON SOCIETY	
<i>Washington, DC</i>	
President	Theodore A. Shell
Vice President	Theodore R. Hudson
Secretary	Angela Grimmer
Treasurer	Jack Towers
Program Coordinator	Mac Grimmer
Ellington '99 Coordinator	Ben Pubols
At-Large Board Members	
Aledra Allen	Patricia Braxton
Larvenia George	Mac Grimmer
Ben Pubols, Jr.	Patricia Willard
[Remaining Position Open]	