

Ellingtonia



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Duke Ellington Society

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We Have Our First Millennium Year Members!

We warmly welcome our first, first-time-ever member for the year 2000, Robert B. Reeves of Solomon, Maryland. A long-time Ellington aficionado, Mr. Reeves joined after attending the Ellington Symposium conducted by Scott Schwartz at the Annapolis JazzFest in June. His son, Robert T. Reeves of Annapolis, joined soon thereafter. As in the past several years, our first renewal membership is from David Fleming of London, England.

We're glad to have all three set an early example for the rest of us.

"Restful Day . . . Convivial Friends . . . 'The' Music"

by Betty Dennis

The board of directors and members and friends of our Society met at president Ted and Geneva Hudson's home at Highland Beach, MD on Saturday, August 28.

They had graciously extended an "Open House" invitation to us. We spent a restful day enjoying a variety of interesting conversations among convivial friends with "The" music as a soft background. Some chose to take a stroll on the beach, others to just sit and relax.

Geneva is president of the Highland Beach Citizens Association, and some of us were fortunate to hear her speak about the history of the community. She also led a private tour of the Frederick Douglass Museum, located just a short walk from their cottage.

Many members brought innovative dishes and diet-destroying but irresistible desserts, fruits and drinks. I tip my hat to Geneva's hosting abilities.

And as a lagniappe—Ulysses LaPradde (a member who lives in New York) called during the board meeting. Some members got the chance to say "Hello!"

Thank you, Geneva and Ted, for a stimulating taste of what good company (not to mention great music) is in our future!

October Program: Centenary Choices

by Mac Grimmer, Program Coordinator

As the Ellington Society starts another season, the 100th birthday celebration continues! Recently, the *Village Voice* asked more than 40 jazz critics and historians to write 200 words on any Ellington "selection, album, tune, musician or notion" that the Centenary inspired. The diversity of responses was surprising, running the full range of eras, and with minimal duplication of choices. Only five albums were mentioned more than once, and several chose to focus on Ellington the pianist. Among the respondents were Dan Morgenstern, Albert Murray, Jean Bach, Peter Keepnews, Ira Gitler, Will Friedwald, Nat Hentoff, Mark Tucker, Chip Defaa, Maurice Peress, Richard Sudhalter, Robert O'Meally, John McDonough, and Gary Giddins, the jazz editor for the *Voice*, whose idea this was.

We'll have copies of the *Voice* article for everyone, so we can all follow the comments as we play some of the selections. There are many interesting and intriguing choices, and the place to hear them is our regular meeting place, the **Grace Lutheran Church, 16th & Varnum Streets, NW, on Saturday, October 2, at 8:00 pm.** Don't miss this fascinating evening of Ellingtonia!

Society Mourns Loss of Jan Rossen

by Jack Dennis

Member Jan Rossen died suddenly on May 30 at the rehabilitation facility where he was recuperating from a broken hip. He had been a member of the Duke Ellington Society since 1971.

Jan will be remembered for his warm friendliness, his intense love of jazz music, of which he amassed a huge collection, his engaging conversation and his generosity.

We extend our sincere condolences to his family. He will be sorely missed.

Thanks, Ted!

In his "Words Upon Retirement" remarks at our June meeting, Theodore A. "Ted" Shell, in typical graciousness, offered his continuing service to our Society and wished good luck to our new officers, predicting that "... if you receive as much cooperation from our membership as I did your success is guaranteed." If you're around him for a while, you learn that Ted has a finely honed sense of humor, though not given to spontaneous or excessive levity, so he was in character when he remarked, "The three presidents before me had legitimate reasons for moving on. My reason was that I did not wish to remain until I became ineffective, or too old to recognize it. . . . You know, if I had served as long, or was to serve as long as Terrell [Allen] did, I would be one hundred and three years old." So Ted Shell has stepped aside—not down, mind you, for his stature is not diminished—but there is good news: He promises "to remain active as ever for at least another twenty years or so."

Ted took on the responsibility of the presidency when our beloved Terrell Allen retired mid-term, surprising us, for we had not known that he was terminally ill. In the ensuing years, Ted has served us more than well—with dedication, energy, dependability, and steadfastness. Especially noteworthy was his generosity, his willingness to open his local and summer homes to us, to serve freely as a resource person, and to share any and everything in his considerable private collection of Ellington (and other) recordings, videos, movies, photographs, documents, and memorabilia. For all these things we say, "Thanks, Ted!"

What a Life! No Warhorses!

A Review by Mac Grimmer

As great as Duke's warhorses are, and as pleasurable as it is listening to them played by the repertory bands today, it is a distinct thrill to hear this different approach, played by Bob Hunt's Duke Ellington Orchestra. *What A Life!* is the name of the CD, sponsored by the UK Duke Ellington Society, and what a life it is, as the CD fairly sizzles through some of Duke's lesser-known tunes. These are mostly from the 20's and 30's, with not a warhorse in sight. No "Rockin' In Rhythm," no "Mood Indigo." Bob Hunt, a virtuoso English trombonist who can, and does, play any of the early trombone parts, almost deserves co-credit with Duke. Not only is he giving us the opportunity to hear early Ellingtonia played anew, he has also rescued and fleshed out some of the unheard early tunes that existed only in manuscript form at the Smithsonian Archives. Duke's 1928 recording of the title tune, for instance, was never released and was apparently lost. Hunt also included a few of his own tunes, which are Ellingtonesque enough to make this a seamless CD.

Of all the orchestras playing Ellington repertory, this is the one with the most original and imaginative approach, defining one way for the future of Ellingtonia.

(Commissioned by the Duke Ellington Society, United Kingdom especially for the Centenary Celebration of Duke's birth, *What a Life!* is available by mail from: DESUK, 47 Yoxley Drive, Ilford, Essex, IG2 6PX, England. For its members in the US, the cost is \$15 + \$3 p&h, payable either by a check drawn on a sterling bank or by cash.)

Centennial Celebration Memorabilia Available

A limited quantity of *Ellington '99* mementos may be obtained by mail at favorable prices. They include:

	Price	Add Postage & Handling		
		US	Canada	Europe
Commemorative Bust, Bronze, 6½"	\$40.00	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$18.00
Commemorative Bust, Ivory, 6½"	40.00	6.00	6.00	18.00
CD: <i>The Duke in Washington</i>	12.00	3.00	3.00	4.50
T-shirts (w/ Logo)	10.00	1.50	1.50	6.00
Refrigerator Magnets (w/Logo)	4.00	1.50	1.50	2.50
USPS Ellington Stamps, Sheet of 50	20.00	.75	1.00	2.00
USPS Ellington Stamps, 1 st Day Covers	5.00	.50	.75	1.50
Ellington '99 Souvenir Program	5.00	1.00	1.00	3.50

Hurry, some of these items will shortly be collectors' items!

Send US money order, check drawn on a US bank, or an International Money Order to "Ellington '99" at: PO Box 42504, Washington, DC20015-9998, USA.

An Ellington '99 Vignette

by George Henderson

While sitting next to Teddy Hudson at the registration desk the first morning of the Conference, I heard a registrant request two additional tickets to the Sacred Concert. Teddy regretfully responded that no more were available, whereupon I informed the registrant, who identified himself as Dr. Sidney Brown, a professor of history at University of Oklahoma, that I had obtained two tickets prior to the Conference and would be glad to give them to him. They were at my home and I would have my wife, Jennie, bring them that evening. He was very appreciative, explaining that his brother and sister-in-law lived in the area and had looked forward to attending with him.

The other day I received a most gracious thank-you note from Sidney. He added that he and his wife had had a unique homecoming. On the very evening of their return, a killer tornado had brushed Oklahoma City, hitting the town in full force, destroying the homes and all the possessions of several of his wife's friends.

This vignette, in my opinion, is illustrative of some of the small things our host Society members did to make the Conference "the biggest and the best," as President Ted Shell so aptly put it in the June newsletter.

Ellington '99

by Lois Moody

This article on the 17th Annual International Duke Ellington Study Group Conference appeared first in DEMS Bulletin (99/3). Comprehensive, balanced, and gracefully written, it is the sort of report that has historical value. We are indeed grateful to Lois Moody and to DEMS' Sjef Hoefsmit for their kind permission for us to reprint her article here.

On Thursday, 29 April 1999, the centennial of Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington's birth in Washington, DC, the 'A' Train (or was it the Happy-Go-Lucky Local?) pulled away promptly at 9 am, setting in motion Ellington '99, the annual conference of the international Duke Ellington Study Group. By the time the journey ended on 2 May with a gala banquet and dance, everyone aboard appreciated just how special the experience had been. The theme of "Edward, You Are Blessed" had been vividly illustrated and a sense of sharing in the blessing extended to everyone present.

In preparation for this unique event, the host team had put together an atmosphere-setting activity schedule for Wednesday—a bus tour of Ellington's Washington, exhibits and a special performance at the Library of Congress and an evening reception at the Washington Marriott Hotel, conference headquarters, where delegates could mingle with old and new friends and enjoy the music of "The New Washingtonians," a student ensemble from the prestigious Duke Ellington School of the Arts. We would hear more from these talented performers, and from other District student groups participating in the Duke Ellington Youth Project, as the week progressed.

With attention and spirits duly centered, delegates from 14 countries were ready for the journey's opening stage, "Washington Wobble." This Thursday morning program brought Duke into perspective as a product of his hometown environment and relationships, both as a person and as a multi-faceted musical artist.

Musician, writer and Ellington scholar **Mark Tucker**, whose presentations at previous conferences have always been highlights, was in peak form as leadoff speaker, addressing the topic of "Retrospection: Ellington, Washington and the Music of Memory." Tucker has explored some of these issues in his book *Duke Ellington: The Early Years*.

Through examples performed at the piano, Tucker traced the influences of Washington life on Ellington's compositions and stated his belief that conscious use of memories in composition is more important than technique. This conscious use of memories can be found in such pieces as "Never Stop Remembering Bill," "Reminiscing in Tempo" and "Washington Wobble." Similarly, historical awareness and progression come into play in *Black, Brown and Beige*, *A Drum Is a Woman*, *The Controversial Suite*, "New World A-Comin'" and "In the Beginning God." A sense of nostalgia colors "Reflections in D," "Black and Tan Fantasy," "The Mooche" and *Far East Suite*. Music heard in his parents' separate churches, at social gatherings and in more worldly establishments during his youth would also find a deliberate place in Ellington's writing—traces of opera, barbershop harmonies, ragtime. With the passing of

time, his compositions increasingly communicated racial consciousness and the African-American experience—faith, love of family, tolerance, respect, compassion. From the early '60s until his death, he would concentrate on these principles but throughout his career one can find strong evidence of similar feelings of security, consolation and sense of identity—"Hymn of Sorrow" from the 1930s film *Symphony in Black* and the 1950s production *My People*, with its bittersweet, mature vision of an era long past.

Washington became, in Tucker's words, "a site of memory," recalling both the past and the break with a particular location. It was a statement worth keeping in mind as a reference point during the remainder of the conference. Above all, Tucker stressed that Ellington's music encourages us to remember our own past, to make it a part of our present and future and to face life with hope and positive attitudes, a state of mind ideally expressed in a gem of collaboration between Ellington and Billy Strayhorn—"Something to Live For."

The morning's finale, "Memories of Shared Blessedness," was a panel discussion chaired by **Patricia Willard**, who for several years was associated with Ellington as editor, researcher and public relations advisor. Joining her were former Ellington vocalists **June Norton** and **Yvonne Duke** (now singing professionally as Eve Smith), jazz broadcasting pioneer **Joseph "Tex" Gathings**, longtime Ellington friend and founding president of the Washington TDES chapter, **Maurice Lawrence**, and early family friend **Annetta Rhea Smith**, whose brother Jerry Rhea was an Ellington confidant and manager of Duke's first band.

Unfortunately, the potential for this segment was only lightly tapped, largely due to the limited allocation of time to accommodate the number of panelists and the way in which available time was used. Nevertheless, it was clear that all the panelists still had warm memories of their association with Ellington and felt that the maestro's influence had personally guided their lives and careers. The anecdotal nature of the discussion created a lively image of Duke as a very special friend, mentor and artist.

Since this is a year of worldwide Ellington celebrations, with Washington outdoing itself to honor the hometown hero, conference organizers very wisely integrated some of the best activities sponsored by other organizations into our own conference schedule. The rest of Thursday brought two such affiliated programs, both involving the Smithsonian Institution. During the afternoon, delegates were taken by bus to the National Museum of American History for a guided tour of the Ellington collection in the Archives Centre. There was also

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ample time to browse through other exhibits devoted to aspects of Ellington's work.

Capping the day was an evening performance by the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra in the towering National Cathedral. This was a concert of Ellington's sacred music, drawn from the three major recorded sacred concerts and conducted by **David Baker**. The cavernous cathedral's acoustics are not kind to performances of this nature, so much of Baker's commentary was lost, as were finer nuances and balances in the music. Putting these painful distractions aside, delegates were still able to immerse themselves in a glorious selection of Ellington and Strayhorn pieces from this important stage in Ellington's creative life. Vocal soloists included **DeVonne Gardner**, **Queen Esther Marrow** and **Kevin Mahogany**, while the **Morgan State University Choir** handled choral assignments. Perhaps one of the most inspiring moments of all came when gifted young tap dancer **Noble Potts** interpreted "David Danced Before the Lord." It was a stunning performance.

The upbeat mood continued on Friday with welcome news of a long-awaited book finally making its appearance. After 12 frustrating years, the Ellington community can finally celebrate publication of the late Eddie Lambert's career-crowning work, *Duke Ellington: A Listener's Guide*. **Sjef Hoefsmit** reviewed the genesis of this detailed work and acknowledged the dedication shown by **Elaine Norsworthy** in seeing it through the publication jungle. **Peter MacHare**, a prominent broadcaster and member of the Washington TDES chapter, then made some perceptive observations on what Lambert's book offers that is missing from other discography-oriented volumes. The music itself holds the spotlight, rather than the minutiae of recording sessions and record labels.

This brief presentation was a fitting introduction to the morning's theme of "Ellington the Composer, Arranger and Pianist." Yet another mammoth and long-awaited work, the newest edition of *DESOR*, the *Duke Ellington Story on Records*, was described by its co-authors, **Luciano Massagli** and **Giovanni Volonté**. A special conference edition of the *DEMS Bulletin* displays sample entries from this two-volume set and offers useful comment on the scope of the updated work, so there is no need to summarize its expanded features here. But it is certainly important to recognize the thoroughness and dedication of the co-authors. Working together since 1964 in Italy, Massagli and Volonté have performed an invaluable service to discographers and collectors worldwide with their ongoing research. This latest edition of *DESOR* contains information up to January 1999 and includes over 500 new entries from those shown in previous editions.

Because of illness, **Austin Lawrence** was forced to cancel his lecture on "Duke Ellington at the Cotton Club" but riding in to the rescue was **Peter MacHare** with a provocative and engaging session on "Duke Ellington and the Classics," adapted from a recent presentation to the Washington TDES

chapter. Through selected recordings and thoughtful commentary, MacHare drew attention to Ellington's contribution to and place in the broad history of modern music, in the process demonstrating that the lines between classical and jazz idioms and approaches to composition and performance have much in common—reworked or "stolen" material, incorporation of ideas from fellow musicians, syncopation, improvisation being just some of the shared traits. In very articulate fashion, MacHare made a case for Ellington's volume, variety and quality of composition placing him on a level with acknowledged stars in the classical pantheon.

MacHare also examined parallels in the history of jazz and modern classical music, using as examples the Gregorian chants recorded by the contemporary vocal group Anonymous Four and bluesman Son House's recording of "John the Revelator." The twin purposes of praising God and celebrating love in all its sensual extremes have been pursued throughout the history of music.

With reference to the work of Ellington and several other performers from classical, jazz, blues and pop arenas, MacHare gently steered us away from preconceived notions of what a specific musical genre should be, suggesting instead that Ellington's work be accepted for what it is—a remarkable body of free-ranging compositions and approaches. MacHare's combination of provocative analysis and gentle humor turned this presentation into one of the best-received sessions of the conference.

In closing the morning, **Steven Lasker** shared some "New Discoveries of a Very Old Vintage," items unearthed during his ongoing search for unknown or long-lost Ellington material. Among his discoveries were out-takes from the movie *Check and Double Check*; April 1923 versions of "Sleepytime Down South" and "Double Check Stomp," performed during a theatre engagement in Hartford, Connecticut that resulted in Ellington's earliest known radio broadcast; a 1934 film studio recording of "Ebony Rhapsody" from *Murder at the Vanities*. This was Ellington's take on Liszt's "Hungarian Rhapsody," excerpts from a February 1941 Mutual Network radio broadcast featuring the Blanton-Webster edition of the orchestra then appearing at the Casa Manana club in Culver City, California. Along with such staples as "Chelsea Bridge" and "Take the 'A' Train" were the less prominent "Love Like This Can't Last" and "Mist on the Moon," which would be quite differently voiced in its later incarnation as "Moon Mist."

The focus shifted to "Ellington the Person" during the afternoon, leading off with **Claire Gordon**, founder of the Bay Area (California) TDES chapter, recalling her years as an Ellington enthusiast and employee in "M'n Duke." Her animated account of first hearing Ellington's orchestra while she was still a young student and eventually being hired to take care of fan mail in his New York office offered a close-up look of the man in a workday context. Gordon's responsi-

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bilities would eventually become more substantial, including public relations, and her friendship with Duke would continue after she left his organization to concentrate on family demands. Her recollections reflected the complexity of Ellington's personality and his unique ways of interacting with people around him.

Quite a different personal view of Ellington was developed by **Rev. Mark S. Harvey**, a jazz musician and teacher of jazz studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in his talk on "New World A-Comin': The Sacred Concerts and Duke Ellington's Religious Vision." Drawing on personal memories dating from 1965—the year of the first sacred concert—Harvey shared his thoughts on Ellington's religious perspectives and attitude toward life. Essential to understanding the Ellington who would devote much of his later effort to works of spiritual significance is awareness of his deep-grounded religious faith. Shaped both by parental influences and the culture of his time, Ellington consistently demonstrated his commitment to moral and social principles. Harvey emphasized Ellington's keen interest in social justice, his love of God and fellow man and his celebration of life through music. This was the Ellington who would call himself a "messenger boy for God."

Delegates were free to pursue several options for evening music or relaxation, since no conference-sponsored event was planned, but it would be unfortunate to miss this opportunity to comment on the exceptional program in place in the Washington area to involve youth from elementary to high school age in their musical heritage, particularly in the legacy of Duke Ellington. Spearheaded by **Dr. Luvenia George**, a local educator and Washington TDES member, the Duke Ellington Youth Project operates in a growing number of area schools and encourages students not only to learn about Ellington's music and cultural significance but to express their responses to his work through creative efforts of their own—poetry, painting, sculpture, dance and both choral and instrumental performance.

Delegates who chose to attend an evening concert of the annual Duke Ellington Youth Festival at the Smithsonian were rewarded with spirited and often exceptional performances of both classic Ellingtonia and less frequently performed pieces. It was encouraging to witness the Ellington legacy taking root in a new generation.

As a bonus, attendees were able to add their applause when award were presented to three individuals for their major contribution to music education programs for Washington-area youth. Among them were **June Norton**, former Ellington vocalist, and **Dr. Theodore Hudson**, Vice-President of the Washington TDES and a key member of the conference coordinating committee.

To begin our final conference day, the emphasis was on "Ellington the Collaborator and Leader." Extending the theme from Thursday afternoon's closing lecture, **Annie Kuebler**, who works on the Ellington collection at the Smithsonian, addressed "The Spiritual Works of Duke Ellington and Mary Lou Williams: Singing His Praises or Seeking Redemption."

In her multi-media presentation, Kuebler explored some of the parallels in the musical and spiritual progress of these two pianist-composers. By the early 40s, Williams—then in her early 30s—was beginning to compose material echoing her search for deeper meaning in life, works such as the *Zodiac Suite* and a very modern, meditative *Ghost of Love*. A spiritual turning point reached during an extended stay in Paris during the 50s led to her return to the United States, withdrawal from music, conversion to Roman Catholicism and dedication to charitable projects. When she eventually returned to music, she would produce such pieces as *Anima Cristi* and *Medi (Offertory Meditation)*. Like Ellington, she was still composing during her final illness early in 1981.

Ellington's concentration on spiritual concerns would come later in his life, his mid-'90s, although evidence of spiritual values and interests can be found in many earlier works. To capture Ellington in the prime of his creation of music of spiritual significance, Kuebler presented a sacred concert featuring *Freedom*, with Ellington articulating the four freedoms central to the life of his irreplaceable collaborator Billy Strayhorn. Ellington went on to offer a "tonal reflection" of the conflicting choices an individual faces at life's final intersection.

Quite apart from music with overt religious content, both Williams and Ellington composed and performed music revealing their spiritual awareness on a broader plane. Kuebler's choices to illustrate this highly personal quality in their work were Williams' slow tempo reading of "It Ain't Necessarily So"—a moment of serenity and faith—and Ellington's "ELOS," a meditative 3/4 time piece suggesting the solitary process of late-night composing and absorption in personal thoughts. This well-researched paper stands as another conference highlight.

Making his debut as a conference speaker was **Peter Townsend**, a writer and Senior Lecturer in the School of Music and Humanities, University of Huddersfield in England. His presentation, "Ellington '42: A Year in the Life," examined Ellington's work in a chronological context. This year would have telling impact on the Ellington and all other jazz ensembles. It was the first full year of US involvement in the Second World War, which brought drastic economic changes—decreased supplies of shellac for records and gasoline for driving and touring, curtailment of non-essential bus and train travel, emergency blackouts along the west coast affecting performance venues. Also to be faced were the emergence of new jazz styles that turned attention away from the bit bands and a disastrous recording ban imposed by American Federation of Musicians president James Petrillo.

For much of that year, the Ellington itinerary would focus on the midwest, both Canadian and American sides of the Great Lakes and the New England states. But there was also an extended stay in Los Angeles, with a chance for studio work, a more settled lifestyle, time for composing and radio network pickups from the Trianon Ballroom. There were also darker overtones to the year—the departures of Ivie

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Anderson and such key sidemen as Barney Bigard and Cootie Williams. The loss of Jimmie Blanton, forced by illness to leave the band late in 1941, was also still being felt. By year's end, the orchestra had worked on the movie *Reveille With Beverly* and new compositions in the book included "C-Jam Clues," "What Am I Here For" and "Main Stem." Ellington had additionally begun work on *Black, Brown and Beige*.

The year was financially successful and the band achieved high rankings in popular polls, although several critics claimed that there had been artistic decline. What Ellington and his orchestra achieved during this difficult year was only possible with high creative powers, strong spiritual grounding, physical stamina and the ability to concentrate under adverse circumstances. What critics perceived as limiting conditions were viewed by Ellington as integral parts of the pursuit of creativity and development. Townsend's approach was yet another way of gaining insights on Ellington and his musical productivity.

Given the theme of the closing afternoon, "Ellington in Historical and Cultural Context," it is not surprising that subject matter would either deal directly with problem issues or trigger controversial reactions. In the latter category would fall "The Masonic Side of Duke Ellington," explored by Belgian musician and jazz activist **Sim Simons**. There is no disputing the important role played by masonic lodges in fostering pride and a sense of identity in the African-American community in the '30s, the period during which Ellington would join. How could one quarrel with such principles as freedom, discretion, wisdom, the pursuit of beauty and the non-dogmatic brotherhood of humanity?

Simons was persuasive in his historical outline of the development of freemasonry and its possible impact on such events as the French and American revolutions through the influence exercised by key individuals who were masons. Less convincing were Simons' efforts to demonstrate how Ellington's music reflected his adherence to masonic principles and made use of masonic symbols and rituals. One could find in many religious and social systems and organizations a commitment to the ideals central to masonic teaching and one could also find similar numerical and figurative symbols at play and interpret them in many ways.

This was confusing territory for most delegates and there were few, if any, signs that they could bridge the gap between Simons' interpretive theories and what they personally heard in Ellington's music.

Taking on the next challenge was **Jeff Lindberg**, a Chicago-based educator, band leader, researcher and transcriber, notably of Ellington and Strayhorn material. In dealing with "Transcription Crisis: Will We Allow Corporate Publishers to Suppress Ellington/Strayhorn's Creativity in the 21st Century?" Lindberg did a superb job of rendering a complicated set of problems accessible to an audience largely unfamiliar with the language, mechanics and difficulties of the transcription process. He provided examples of how different transcribers, starting with the

same recorded version of a piece, could arrive at different conclusions on harmonies and voicings. When preparing to issue an edited transcription, which transcriber's version would you use? Which recorded performance of a specific piece should serve as the basis of a transcription? Lindberg believes that varied sources should be considered. This process, a 20th century phenomenon, is by nature difficult and subjective, so no matter the degree of skill or experience brought to the task, it remains impossible to replicate a specific performance, and likewise impossible to publish the definitive transcription of a particular piece.

Bringing issues of copyright into the equation, Lindberg indicated that some publishers might attempt to control the issuing of transcribed editions by copyrighting a transcription as the transcription. It is therefore essential that a legal definition of transcription from recordings be developed.

Bringing this 17th annual conference to a close was the ever-energetic **Phil Schaap**, a broadcaster, music educator and researcher from New York, and a frequent conference lecturer. His topic was "Duke Ellington's World Music: Jazz an International Art Form."

Schaap's focus was on Ellington's remarkable insight in expanding the jazz horizon worldwide—not just as popular entertainment but as an art form. Ellington would accomplish his goals in part through showcasing his music on foreign tours, the first of which took place in 1933. His objectives also led Ellington to tell the African-American experience through music but without restricting himself to considering its role in jazz. Ellington would also use musical sources from other countries and cultures. Evidence of his deliberate efforts to reach out for new inspiration and expression can be found in such suites as the *Far East*, *Latin-American* and *Togo Brava*. He also realized quite early in his career that recognition of his music and acceptance of his views might not happen for another generation.

With presentations completed, it was time for a last round of socializing and discussion with friends at a farewell banquet. The evening then ended on a well-deserved high note with a program of *Ellingtonia* played by the Great American Music Ensemble, conducted by **Doug Richards**. Prominent in the trombone section was **Art Baron**, an Ellington orchestra member during the maestro's latter period. As a bonus, **Yvonne Duke** sat in for "Love You Madly," her best known feature with Ellington.

So ended a memorable meeting of the Ellington conference community. Organizers deserve hearty thanks and congratulations for their warm welcome, efficient arrangements and a program of presentations and events that clearly demonstrated how blessed Ellington had been in every aspect of his life. As **Dr. Luvenia George** noted at the Friday evening Duke Ellington Youth Festival concert, "Ellington's music still teaches, inspires and elevates us." Conference delegates could all consider themselves well blessed to have participated in this centennial celebration and to have learned something new, inspiring and positive from Ellington's creative output.

Short Sheets . . .

The centennial year has been a great year for full-length publications on Ellington. Another, though not about Ellington only, is on the way. Peter Townsend is putting finishing touches on his book on jazz in American culture. ♪ ♪ The Smithsonian's Kennedy Center Education Department and the Music Educators National Conference have collaborated on a new Ellington web site for teachers and students: <www.dellington.org> ♪ ♪ The Ellington Fellowship at Yale University now has a web site: <www.yale.edu/schmus/DE/index.htm> ♪ ♪ Local pianist Larry Eanet has a new CD, *Sunset Stomp*, accompanied by Ron Hockett, reeds, Tommy Cecil, bass, and Harold Summey, Jr., drums. ♪ ♪ We are sorry that Andy Homzy could not attend our Conference, but are happy that he led the all-star European Broadcasting Union Jazz Orchestra in concert in Montreal on Duke's birthday. Fortunately, the event was recorded for release on the Justin Time label in June. ♪ ♪ There is now a Duke Ellington Square in the Dunbar Hotel area on Central Avenue in Los Angeles and a Clark Terry Street Glen Cove, NY. ♪ ♪ Niani Kilkenny, whose Smithsonian office sponsors, among other programs, the Ellington Youth Project, is recuperating at home following a stay in the hospital. We wish her a speedy recovery and extend condolences to her on the recent death of her husband. ♪ ♪ Several of our area experts continue participating in Centenary Year events. Reuben Jackson hosted the "Ode to Ellington" evening headlined by Abdullah Ibrahim at the Carter Barron in July and served on a "What Is Freedom in Jazz" panel at HR57, a local venue. ♪ ♪ At the "Duke Ellington: His Music Lets Freedom Ring" week-long seminar for teachers in Chicago, Annie Kuebler was on the panel about Ellington's response to the historically important 1960s, especially the Civil Rights Movement; Luvenia George and John Edward Hasse were panelists on the session on how to teach the Ellington legacy. ♪ ♪ A movement to restore the Howard not as a theater but as a "Chitlin' Circuit" Performers Hall of Fame is spearheaded by Geneva Perry, a local who played saxophone with the International Sweethearts of Rhythm. Watch for further announcements. ♪ ♪ *Duke Ellington* by Janna Tull Steed, scheduled for September release, is the first of the "Lives and Legacies" series of spiritual biographies by Crossroads Publishing.

Ellington Knew American History

In the early 1940s Duke wrote "Barzallai Lew," about a practically unheard of hero in the American Revolution. A recent book, *Twenty Families of Color in Massachusetts: 1742-1998* by Franklin Dorman, published by the New England Historic Genealogical Society, has a portrait of Lew on its cover. The original painting hangs in the Walter Thurston Room of the US State Department building in Washington.

More Conference Comments to Come

As we were going to press, copies arrived of the latest *Blue Light*, DESUK's quarterly, and the Duke Ellington Society of Sweden's *Bulletin*. Both have articles on Ellington '99, which we will report on in our next issue.

Centennial Celebrations Continue

On a very warm May afternoon, the current Ellington band, led by grandson Paul Ellington, played with enthusiasm at the opening of the Mellon Sculpture Garden on the Mall. Among its sidemen were two who played regularly with Duke himself in the last years—trumpeter Barrie Lee Hall and drummer Rocky White. The band played close-to-original-score pieces satisfactorily, with good, but not slavishly imitative, solos. While strictly speaking it is not an Ellington repertory orchestra, it is a good big band in its own right.

Granddaughter Mercedes Ellington served as hostess and choreographer for a multi-media production, "Sophisticated Ellington: Symphony and Swing" at Wolf Trap in early August. Washington's National Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Anthony Aibel, vocalists, and dancers shared the billing.

Throughout-the-year observances of Ellington's 100th birthday are truly international. Our member Lois Moody writes that "During the 10-day Ottawa International Jazz Festival, no less than three evening programs were entirely devoted to the music of Ellington and Strayhorn." Their National Centre Orchestra performed *Black, Brown, and Beige*, *The River*, and *Three Black Kings*; the next night it was the Lincoln Center Orchestra drawing the largest single-night crowd in the festival's history; and there was a more intimate program of Ellington/Strayhorn music by vocalist Roscoe Gill. At the month-long Edinburgh International Jazz Festival (which our Aledra Allen attends annually), the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra featured the music of Ellington and a special concert tribute to Johnny Hodges by alto saxophonist Bobbie Watson. Ellingtonia was heard in traditionally classical settings as well. Using charts by David Berger, Jessye Norman performed some of Duke's sacred music at a concert in London.

Annual Election Held

At the June meeting, the slate of officers and board of directors presented by the Nominations Committee were elected. Preceding the election, retiring president Ted Shell promised to continue working for the Society and passed his blessings on to those about to be chosen. Changes include Ted Hudson as president and Ben Pubols as vice-president. Angela Grimmer and Jack Towers were re-elected as secretary and treasurer, respectively. New board members are John Dennis, Peter MacHare, and Ted Shell; Aledra Allen, Patricia Braxton, Luvenia George, and Mac Grimmer were re-elected to the board.

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

About Our Members

A feature article in the Smithsonian's July issue of *The Torch* is about **Scott Schwartz** and his recently published book, *Faith Serpents and Fire*. ♪ ♪ You will want to download the "Ellington '99 Memories" that **Peter MacHare** has posted on his Ellington Panorama internet site: <www.geocities.com/BourbonStreet/Square/2660/ell/> It's that good, and with photographs. ♪ ♪ **Luvania George's** "Duke Ellington: The Man and His Music" in *Music Educator's Journal* (May 1999) develops how his music offers a wide range of options for introducing students to twentieth-century music of all types. ♪ ♪ In June, **Ted Hudson** substituted for Luvania George, whose father had died, for "An Afternoon with Ellington: The Man and His Music" at the UDC Academy for Lifetime Learning. ♪ ♪ In the most recent *DEMS Bulletin*, **Patricia Willard** informs that recently deceased Betty's correct surname was Roach, not Roché, a term affected by Duke. ♪ ♪ Congratulations are in order for Davey Yarborough. He has been named to the International Association of Jazz Educators' prestigious Resource Team, his area of responsibility being Secondary Education. ♪ ♪ **Bob Reny** has a CD review in the Summer 1999 issue of *IJRC Journal*. ♪ ♪

Harry "Sweets" Edison, 1916-1999

We mourn the loss of masterful trumpeter "Sweets" Edison, who died in July. Ellington enthusiasts likely will remember him best for his superb performances with Duke and other luminaries on two releases that help give meaning to the term "classic," *Back to Back* and *Side by Side*. Persons at Ellington '96 in Toronto will remember Michael Roeder's illuminating analysis of Duke's and his interplay on these recordings.

Uniquely Organized CD Set Released

The *Duke Ellington-Anniversary* boxed set by Masters of Music has 13 CDs, each having a specific (can we use the word?) category, for example, "Ballads," "Portraits," "Jungle," "Ladies," "Vocal," "Friends." The selections are from about 1927 to 1949, some for airchecks, some from commercially released sources. Just think, if one feels in the mood for it, one can listen to, say, just "Piano" or "Blues" selections.

For Information About ELLINGTON 2000

May 25th thru May 28th in Hollywood
Contact the Southern California Duke Ellington Society
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New President, Almost New Recordings Featured at June Meeting

by Angela Grimmer, Secretary

In our last meeting before the Ellington Society's summer vacation, Jack Towers gave us a preview of the 24-CD RCA Centennial Edition of Duke's music. New processing greatly improved the sound, particularly of the early recordings, and many of us heard this familiar music as if we were hearing it for the first time. Jack also played some of the new *Newport* and *Anatomy of a Murder* releases, with equally startling results. In particular, *Anatomy of a Murder*, with its extra tracks and improved sound quality, almost seemed like an entirely new Ducal production.

At intermission, the business meeting consisted of election of officers. Ted Hudson was elected as our new president, only the fifth since the founding of the Washington Ellington Society some 40-odd years ago, and other officers elected are as listed elsewhere in this newsletter. Our retiring president, Ted Shell, was given a standing ovation and a vote of thanks for his tenure and devotion to Ellingtonia.

Schwartz Shines on a Rainy Day

The Annapolis JazzFest in June was a thoroughly disappointing "wash"—literally. It rained all day, sometimes, it seemed, horizontally. Thus, musicians and equipment people declined to attempt the show.

There was a happy note for this otherwise depressing occasion. Fortunately, the Ellington Symposium was held indoors. Our Scott Schwartz gave an excellent presentation, well conceived, prepared, and delivered—so much so that it elicited enthusiastic audience involvement.

Our member Jack Ladd Carr, whose initiative led to an Ellington Component of the JazzFest, and Ted Hudson had prepared a very attractive booth, at which they did sell a few Ellington '99 mementos.

Jack, a board member of the Annapolis Symphony, for whose benefit the annual events are held, will push for a regular Ellington Component at future JazzFests.

