

Ellingtonia



Newsletter Of The
Duke Ellington Society
Washington, D.C.

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Theodore R. Hudson, Editor

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New Washingtonians Invited To Perform at French Festival

The Ellington School of the Arts' New Washingtonians Orchestra, directed by our member Davey Yarborough, appeared in concert in April to raise funds to support their travel to France in August to play at the prestigious Marciac Jazz Festival. Grammy winner Shirley Horn was their special guest artist.

In order to go, these students must raise \$50,000 for travel, lodging, and meals. They very much deserve and need our support. Sponsorship packages are available. Contact Stacy Williams by e-mail at <tonedeafe@aol.com > or by phone at 703-768-0529. You may take or send a donation to: The Ellington Fund, 3500 R Street, NW, Suite 100, Washington, DC 20007, phone 202-333-2555. VISA/MC and checks are accepted. Please be sure to specify that your donation is for the New Washingtonians Jazz Orchestra.

Elections Take Place on June 10

by Ben Pubols, Nominations Committee Chair

As required by our By-Laws, the Nominations Committee's slate of candidates for officers and board members for 2000-01 was announced at our May meeting. They are: President, Ted Hudson; Vice-president and Treasurer, Ben Pubols; Secretary, Angela Grimmer; and for seven Board seats, eight nominees: Patricia Braxton, Jack Dennis, Luvenia George, Mac Grimmer, Peter MacHare, Bob Reny, Ted Shell, and Jack Towers. Voting will take place at our meeting on June 10, at which time additional nominations may be made from the floor.

Overseas and other members not residing in the Washington, DC area can participate in the voting. If you are such a member and wish to vote, contact Ben Pubols right away by e-mail: <bhpubols@gateway.net > or by regular mail at 3302 Shepherd Street, Chevy Chase, MD 20815, USA. You will be advised of the procedure so that your vote is received by June 5.

The Committee also has identified members not subject to election who have agreed to be committee chairs, coordinators, and other key persons in the service of the Society.

June Program: Video Night

by Mac Grimmer, Program Coordinator

Since some of our members will be out of town in early June attending the Annual Ellington Conference in Los Angeles, our meeting date has been moved back a week, to Saturday, June 10. This will be a video night, utilizing our new television set, of Duke music played by both himself and others, and a segment of a nationally televised program about one of our members, Davey Yarborough.

One of the videos is selections from Duke's sacred music in Lugano Cathedral, by a Swiss big band. Guest soloists are Michele Hendricks and Jon Faddis, one of today's trumpet virtuosos. The television excerpt about Davey will be "The Jazz Teacher," hosted by Connie Chung on the October 18 "20/20" show. Then there is a video of the Ellington band in 1959 playing on one of the Timex TV shows, with an all-star lineup that rivals the "Great Day in Harlem" photo. On "Perdido," for instance, jamming with the band are Louis Armstrong, Milt Hinton, Dizzy Gillespie, Coleman Hawkins, Roy Eldridge, Vic Dickenson, Jo Jones, Bobby Hackett, Trummy Young, and Gene Krupa, among others. Too bad nobody brought a camera—apparently the only one there was the TV camera!

For a glimpse of this unusual and unique event, be at our regular meeting place, **Grace Lutheran Church, 16th and Varnum Streets, NW at 8 pm, Saturday, June 10.** This is our final meeting of the season, and after this we can all go on our summer vacation!

Ellington's First Biographer Passes

Barry Ulanov, author *Duke Ellington* (1947), died last month. He was 82. The *NY Times* obituary headline described him as a "Scholar of Jazz, Art and Catholicism.." When Ulanov wrote his biography of Duke he was editor of *Metronome* magazine. In later years he was a professor of English at Columbia U., lecturer in religion at Union Theological Seminary, and author of works on religion and psychology. Despite his concertmaster father's distaste for jazz, Ulanov early became an lover of it and remained so.

Louie Bellson, The Composer

by Patricia Willard

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Louie Bellson remembers being astonished when Duke Ellington began discussing the extended drum solo he was incorporating into his first Concert of Sacred Music for its September 1965 premiere at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco.

Louie questioned the appropriateness. Without hesitation, Duke quoted Exodus 19:16: "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud..." Louie," Duke smiled, "the thunders and lightnings—that's you!"

Louie's divine metric meteorology so pleased Duke that he suggested, "You know, Louie, you should write a concert of sacred music." For more than three decades, Bellson, pondering The Maestro's prompt, noted fragmented ideas and melody lines.

On March 5, 2000, Louie Bellson and the University of Southern California Thornton Studio Jazz Band and Chorus presented the world premiere of The Louie Bellson Sacred Music Program, dedicated to Duke Ellington, at Bovard Auditorium at the university's Los Angeles campus.

"Lightning & Thunder" is the opening movement, introducing the theme "No-One but God," co-composed with and arranged by Louie's long-time collaborator Jack Hayes. Subsequent movements "He's The Lord," "Jesus," "Love," "Thank You Lord," "He's The One," "New Lou," "Sextet," "Look At Me" and "Celebration" climax with a reprise of "No-One..." USC Band director John Thomas, formerly a trumpeter with Bellson's big band, shared conducting with Buddy Baker, Mark Lathan, Hayes and Bellson, when he wasn't at the drums. Several sections were collaborations between Louie and Baker, Hayes and Albert Alva. Lathan was the choral arranger.

The music was recorded in Hollywood the following week and should be available on CD this year, along with Bellson's *Ballet in Jazz* based on the marriage vows. The *Ballet* in four movements, premiered with Dizzy Gillespie as soloist at the First Las Vegas Jazz Festival, July 8, 1962, was reprised at the USC concert with Bobby Shew soloing on trumpet and flugelhorn and was recorded in May with the USC Thornton Studio Jazz Band, augmented by members of the Thornton Symphony.

During the standing ovation the performances inspired, Steven Lasker, co-chairman of Ellington 2000, reacted: "How exciting that someone is still writing really beautiful music!"

Members' Creations Well-Received

We were disappointed, of course, that Anthony Brown's *Ellington-Strayhorn's Far East Suite* CD by his Asian American Orchestra did not win the Grammy for the Best Jazz Ensemble Performance. Regardless, it continues to earn critical compliments. Our curiosity piqued, we checked a popular internet source for books, music, and reviews of same to see what we could see about productions by some of our members.

Anthony's has a 5-star rating and has a high sales rank. As to *Live at Fargo*, recorded in 1940 by Jack Towers and Dick Burris, and a past Grammy winner, it's no surprise that not only does it remain popular after all these years, but that is the #1 seller in North Dakota.

Two books by members continue to have 5-star ratings: Janna Steed's *Duke Ellington: A Spiritual Biography* and John Edward Hasse's *Beyond Category*. "Poignant" and "fully realized" are among the descriptors of Janna's by reviewers. John's rates highly complimentary editorial reviews and is described as "compelling" by a customer reviewer. And the just published *Jazz: The First Century*, edited by John, is off to a good start. Needless to say, while not readily available at sources of popular books, *The New Desor* by Luciano Massagli and member Giovanni M. Volonté, a "bible" for serious Ellington devotees, exemplifies the word classic.

As Duke was wont to say, "Everybody, look handsome!"

Excellence Characterizes Decade of Ellington Youth Project

A series of events at the Smithsonian's Museum of American History (NMAH) in April culminated the end of the tenth academic year of the Duke Ellington Youth Project. The Project is a collaborative effort of the DC Public Schools and the NMAH's Program in African American Culture whose multi-disciplinary curriculum has served as a model for schools systems, museums, and other cultural institutions that have instituted similar programs in a number of places in the United States.

An opening Poetry Recital on April 25 was much more than routine readings by students. It was a professionally articulated, seamless program of music and recitatives by a choir that also provided background music for the reading of students' poems before an appreciative and responsive audience. This program was immediately followed by the opening reception for the Student Arts Show, which will run through May 31 in Photography Hall of NMAH. Two days later the Annual Festival of drama, instrumental and vocal music, and dance delighted a large gathering that crowded Flag Hall. All-in-all, the students did themselves, their families, and their schools justifiably proud. Our Society is especially proud, too, in that the conceiver and director of the Duke Ellington Youth Project is our own Luvenia George!

Small wonder that the Project has been described as "An Exemplar in Arts Education."

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Release of Austin H. Lawrence's *Duke Ellington and His World: A Biography*, scheduled for December of last year, has been stopped by Schirmer Books. Likely it will be available in January 2001 from another publisher. ♪ ♪ Louis Appelbaum, generally considered the person most responsible for Duke's appearances at the Stratford Shakespeare Festivals, which led to his composing of *Such Sweet Thunder* (a.k.a. *The Shakespearean Suite*) and music for a *Timon of Athens* staging, passed away recently. ♪ ♪ "In Recognition of Outstanding Contributions to the 2000 Duke Ellington Youth Project," the Archives Center of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History was awarded a certificate of appreciation by Niani Kilkenny, director of the Program in African American Culture, and Spencer Crew, director of the Museum. ♪ ♪ We haven't seen it, but understand that Graham Lock's *Blutopia: Visions of the Future and Revisions of the Past in the Work of Sun Ra, Duke Ellington, and Anthony Braxton* (Durham, Duke UP, 1999) has two chapters on Duke, "In the Jungles of America: History without Saying It" and "Zajj: Renegotiating Her History." ♪ ♪ The recent Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra concert featuring Mary Lou Williams works included Ellington-related music such as "Trumpets No End" ("Blue Skies"), but as a showcase for trombones and trumpeter Joe Wilder; "O.W.," recorded by Ellington but not released; and "Aries Mood: A Portrait of Ben Webster." The program notes, including a discography and bibliography, were written by Annie Kuebler.

Info Sought on Duke as Freemason

Researcher Alain Duquesne, a Parisian, will appreciate any help in his quest for information about Duke as a freemason.

Mr. Duquesne may be contacted at: 80 Av. Mozart, 75016 Paris, France. He may be reached by e-mail at: alainduquesne@hotmail.com

Ralph Sinkfield, 1912-2000

Services were held on May 5 for Ralph Sinkfield, a member of our Society for a number of years, who died on April 30. He is survived by his wife, Ophelia, two sons, a daughter, grandchildren, and other relatives.

We extend to his family and friends our sincere sympathy.

Conference Coverage in Next Issue

This June issue of *Ellingtonia* will be out before Ellington 200, the Eighteenth Annual International Duke Ellington Conference, in Los Angeles at the end of May. Hence, articles about it will be in our next issue, distributed in September.

Hasse Speaks at St. Louis Cathedral

The arts as a manifestation of spirituality was the topic of a sermon by John Edward Hasse at Christ Church Cathedral in St. Louis for its annual Flower Festival Eurcharist on Saturday, April 29. That evening he appeared on Don Wolff's jazz radio program, a celebration of Ellington's birthday. The next day John preached on "Duke Ellington's Spiritual Journey" at the Cathedral's regular Sunday morning services.

Reports are that John's sermons were insightful and very favorably received. One long-time, senior worshiper said that his talk on the arts was the "best ever" she had heard on the subject. Both sermons were "very appropriate for the occasion," according to one member of the Cathedral. Other events in the Flower Festival week included a trip to the Missouri Botanical Garden, a Flower Festival Evensong, and a flower street fair.

(Ed. Note: We thank Anna H. Mason, mother of our member John E. Mason, for providing information for this article.)

Revised Schedule for Ellington 2000

Wednesday, May 24 Evening Program

Mixer with Live Music ("No Karaoke")

Thursday, May 25

Kenny Burrell - keynote speaker

Roger Boyes - "Duke's Orchard"

Peter Anthony Andrews - Executive Director, National Museum of Harlem

Steven Lasker - Ellington rarities

Lee Farley - seldom seen videos of Ellingtonians in other settings

* Anthony Brown - Asian Persuasion: Processes of intercultural music practices in preparation and recording of *Far East Suite*

Evening

Tom Talbert Orchestra; vocalist Vickie Copeland accomp. by Dini Clarke

Friday, May 26

Richard Ehrenzeller - Ellington-Charlie Barnet connection

George Avalkian - recollections of producing *Ellington at Newport*

Gerald Wilson - interviewed by Harold Jovien and Bill Hill

Art Zimmerman - plays undocumented stereo tapes of DEO and Duke and

Strayhorn in live appearances in 50s

Basilio Serrano - Ellington and Tizol: Cross-Cultural Collaboration

Steve Hancock - Ellington music adapted for solo guitar

Evening

Bill Berry All Star L.A. Band w/vocalists Ernie Andrews and Trish Turner

Saturday, May 27

* Janna Tull Steed - From Slang to Scripture: Ellington as Exegete

* John Edward Hasse - Smithsonian Institution's jazz-related activities

** Annie Kuebler - new Ellington-related collections at the Smithsonian

Horace Silver and Chuck Niles - their album of appreciation of Ellington

* Patricia Willard - panel discussion of *Assault on a Queen* by Buddy

Collette, Buster Cooper, and John Lamb

Mark Cantor - films, incl. 15 mins. of previously unseen *Jump for Joy*

Brooks Kerr - at piano, sharing memories of Duke

Evening

Annual Banquet

All Star Ellington Group: Bill Berry, Kenny Burrell, Buster Cooper, John Lamb,

Gerald Wiggins, Frankie Capp, Art Baron, w/vocalists Barbara McNair and Herb

Jeffries

Sunday, May 28

Morning Closing Ceremonies

Guided Bus Tour, ending with lunch and live music at Ellington H.S. (\$30)

* Member of our Society

** Smithsonian's Ellington Collection staffer

An "All for the Love of Duke" Production.

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

About Our Members

The Reverend Janna Tull Steed has an engagingly thoughtful article entitled, "Jazz and Spirituality," on the <allaboutjazz.com> web site. This uncommonly evocative essay is well worth downloading to go back to and reflect on from time-to-time. ♪♪ Borders Books recently celebrated 100 years of jazz by a discussion by John Edward Hasse, who edited the new book *Jazz: The First Century* (NY: William Morris), and Murray Horwitz, vice-president of National Public Radio for cultural programming. (Ed. note: We have not obtained a copy yet, but plan to include commentary about the book in a later issue.) One of the contributors to the book is Ellington Collection staffer Annie Kuebler, who writes of "The Growing Role of Women in Jazz." ♪♪ A sure sign of spring is that Barbara and Jerry Valburn have left Florida, where they spend winters, for their home in Massachusetts. ♪♪ In our last issue, we noted members who have missed none or only one of the annual conferences. John Hornsby and wife, Gerry, have been to every one since their first, in Oldham, England in 1985. Incidentally, John was present at Jerry Valburn's "Breakfast Dance" on Sunday morning at the IARJC Convention in Detroit in 1982, a meeting that many consider a/the progenitor of the Annual International Duke Ellington Study Group Conferences, the first of which we sponsored in 1983 and that continue this year as "Ellington 2000." ♪♪ We thank our president emeritus, Ted Shell, for contributing to our Society a VCR player, which we will use for enjoying videos on our new 32-inch television set.

♪♪ Area Performances by Our Members ♪♪

Esther Williams and Trio

Washington Plaza Hotel, 10 Thomas Circle, NW
May 12-13, 26-27, June 9-10, 23-24, July 7-8, 21-22
(No Cover - No Minimum)

Ferebee Streett Thulman

Featured Vocalist at the Cool Cat Capers
Sponsored by Friends of the Annapolis Symphony
June 10, St. John's College, Annapolis

Davey Yarborough Hosting Jazz Series, French Embassy

♪♪ (Call 202-944-8000 for tickets and schedule.) ♪♪

DUKE ELLINGTON SOCIETY
Washington, DC

President	Theodore R. Hudson
President Emeritus	Theodore A. Shell
Vice President and Co-Treasurer	Ben Pubols
Secretary	Angela Grimmer
Treasurer	Jack Towers
Program Coordinator	Mac Grimmer
At-Large Board Members	
Aledra Allen	Patricia Braxton
John Dennis	Luvenia George
Mac Grimmer	Peter MacHare
Theodore A. Shell	

Bussing Through Duke's Washington

by Angela Grimmer, Secretary

Our May meeting was a real treat, a sightseeing tour of Ellington's Washington. We would like to express our appreciation to John and Vinnie Best, of Capitol Entertainment Services, Inc., which is inaugurating a "Duke Ellington Neighborhood" tour as one of their regular sightseeing tours of Washington.

We began at the Smithsonian, the current Mecca of Ellingtonia, where we saw the permanent Ellington exhibit as well as the Ella Fitzgerald exhibit and the newly opened student art show of the Duke Ellington Youth Project of the DC public schools. Then we bussed through the Shaw neighborhood, passing by the houses where Duke lived as a teenager, the Whitelaw Hotel, and his parents' home on T Street. At 13th & U, we disembarked to admire the photo exhibit of the early days of U Street and to have our picture taken in front of the Ellington mural. We took note of the Casbah (now the Songhai, previously Jelly Roll Morton's Jungle Inn), where Ray Nance was held over in the early 40s while on vacation from the Ellington orchestra. We were gratified to see that the True Reformer Hall is being restored, but the Howard Theater, sadly, is not. However, next to the Howard, we noted that Frank Holliday's Pool Hall, to which Ellington devotes four pages in *MIMM*, is still a going concern, although under another name. We also took note of the building at 9th & V, which for a brief period of time in 1948 was a club named "Duke Ellington's." We passed by the sites of Griffith Stadium (where Duke hawked peanuts as a kid) and the Poodle Dog Cafe (the inspiration for Duke's first composition, "Soda Fountain Rag"). Lastly, we noted something of interest to all local jazz fans, the imminent resurrection of the most famous Washington jazz club from the 30s through the 60s, the Bohemian (or Crystal) Caverns at 11th & U, re-opening in June. Duke first heard Yvonne sing here, and hired her for the band.

Again, thanks to John and Vinnie Best for a fascinating afternoon.

18th Annual International Duke Ellington Conference

REGISTRATION

\$195 U.S. Funds, Payable to Duke Ellington Society
PO Box 2652, Culver City, CA 90231-2652

QUESTIONS? PLEASE CALL OR E-MAIL:

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