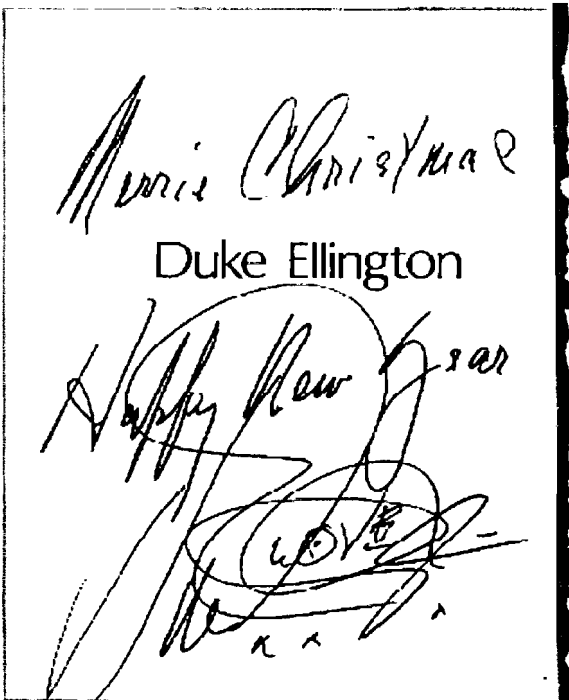


Ellingtonia



Newsletter Of The
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Theodore R. Hudson, Editor
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Courtesy the Duke Ellington Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

The inside of this undated card has printed lyrics from "Something 'bout Believing" from his Sacred Music.

Billy Strayhorn's Birth And Art Commemorated

On November 25, 1915, William Thomas Strayhorn was born in Dayton, Ohio. He became a giant in music in his own right. And, as Duke Ellington said, "He was not, as he was often referred to by many, my alter ego. Billy Strayhorn was my right arm, my left arm, all the eyes in the back of my head. . . . God bless Billy Strayhorn."

Among tributes to him is a "Remembering Strays" program in November by the Bay Area Ellington Society, including a birthday cake. The focus: music composed by Billy alone.

As we now observe the eighty-fifth anniversary of his birth, we are grateful for Billy Strayhorn's gifts of artistic beauty that so greatly enrich our lives.

December Meeting: An Evening at the Smithsonian

by Mac Grimmer & Peter MacHare, Program Coordinators

We will kick off the holiday season this year with another evening at the Smithsonian Archives Center, which will again be the host for our December meeting. As they have for the past several years, these occasions, as well as being fascinating multimedia experiences, permit us to catch up on the latest news and developments in the world of Ellingtonia. We may also have a glimpse of the recent acquisitions; for instance, in the last year, the Cat Anderson, Tom Whaley and Edward and Gaye Ellington collections have been added, the latter including many new photographs and music manuscripts.

The Archives Center is in the National Museum of American History, on Constitution Avenue between 12th and 14th Streets, NW. Please use the Constitution Avenue entrance and arrive **between 7:30 and 8:00 pm**, when the guards and staff will be on hand to escort you to the Archives Center, since the museum will be closed to the public except for us at this time. The program starts at **8:00 pm on Saturday, December 2**—another unique evening of Ellingtonia!

Edward and Gaye Ellington Collection Now Available to Public

Most of the materials so graciously donated to the Smithsonian Institution by Ellington grandchildren Edward and Gaye Ellington have been processed. They may now be examined by researchers and other members of the public at the Archives Center of the National Museum of American History. Within the year 2001, title listings of the contents will be accessible on the Center's web site.

The collection contains music manuscripts, photographs, handwritten notes, programs, other articles, and ephemera, but no recordings. The approximately three cubic feet of music is especially notable in several respects, mainly because of materials not available otherwise. For example, there are arrangements with parts for only two trombones, before Lawrence Brown joined the band, and there is

(Continued on page 3 under "New Collection")

Seasonal Profferings for the Soul and the Body:

Quotation of the Month

At this time of the year special observances begin for several religions, including prominently Christian, Jewish, and Muslim. In a broadly ecumenical spirit we offer the following excerpt from a guest sermon, "Duke Ellington's Spiritual Journey...and Ours" by John Edward Hasse at the Christ Church Cathedral in St. Louis on its Flower Festival Sunday last April. We thank John for his kind permission to reprint it.

I think Ellington was on a journey to fulfill God's promise in him, through good works of a musical nature. "Ellington," said critic Stanley Dance, "knew that what some called genius was really the exercise of gifts...from God."

Ellington wasn't interested just in the destination, but in the daily steps along that spiritual journey. Because each and every day of his adult life, he made music—music which he gave to people of all colors, of all nationalities, of all stations in life. . . .

Duke Ellington understood that difference is God-given and sacred. He sought out difference in the musicians he hired, affirmed it, and celebrated it. He composed not for the instrument, but for the man *behind* the instrument—not for alto saxophone, but for Johnny Hodges. Not for violin but for Ray Nance. For the God-given, different talents of each person.

His was a message with religious and moral significance, and political import as well. Imagine what a different world we'd have if all the political leaders recognized what Duke Ellington knew: that God has given us each different gifts and God wants us nations and groups to find a way to draw on each person's gifts, minimizing their weaknesses, and emphasizing their strengths.

Duke Ellington was blessed indeed, and through his life and work, God has blessed all of us. Let us give thanks for Duke Ellington's music and let us take inspiration from his message. By so doing, God's blessing of Ellington will continue...through us.

Duke's Dream Cookies

A while back Jane Vollmer posted a recipe for cookies on the Duke-LYM web site. She wrote, "When my boys were growing up, I would bake once a day. One snack for after school treat and another for supper. When I did get called on the road, Duke would always ask me to bring him 'A Taste.' This was his favorite. Maybe some of you bakers may like to make them for Christmas." This is her recipe:

¾ cup of butter

⅓ cup brown sugar

1 ½ cups of flour

Cream together. Pat down in a 9" square cake tin. Bake in a slow oven 15 minutes until brown.

Cool slightly.

Beat 2 eggs and add:

1 ½ cups of brown sugar

1 cup of broken nut meat (ground nuts -- walnuts and pecans are best)

1 cup of coconut

2 tbsp flour

¼ tsp baking powder

⅛ tsp salt

Pour over first mixture. Bake at 325 about 20 minutes – watch it because ovens vary in temperature.

Cool and cut in squares.

Ms. Vollmer recalls, "I still don't know how Duke ever ate a full shirt box full of them. But boy could he eat." To which we add, wait until some of our readers try some! Hint to our members: Wouldn't they be great at our Holiday Party in January!

We are grateful to Jane Vollmer for sharing her recipe and for her permission for us to publish it here.

Short Sheets . . .

♪ ♪ Brian Gilmore gave a reading from his *Jungle Nights & Soda Fountain Rags* in Boston in October. He was surprised that the audience was not aware that Johnny Hodges was born just across the river in Cambridge and was raised in Boston. He writes, "I read a Johnny Hodges poem anyway and they loved it." ♪ ♪ Christle Cook, widow of Willie Cook, whose passing we reported in our previous issue, died in Stockholm several weeks ago. ♪ ♪ Reports are that TDES' second annual one-day conference was very successful. A posting by Bill Saxonis on the Duke-LYM web site states that "Conference attendees, representing at least three different countries, were treated to an eclectic blend of personal reflection, academic research and music (recorded and live)." We hope that tapes of the presentations and copies of the papers will be available for those who could not attend. TDES plans to have a third such conference for next year. ♪ ♪

Popular Smithsonian Staffer Leaving to Accept New Position

Annie Kuebler, who has worked mainly on the Ellington and allied materials at the Smithsonian, has accepted an appointment as Project Archivist of the Mary Lou Williams Collection at the Institute for Jazz Studies at Rutgers University in Newark, New Jersey. For several years she has been researching Williams on her own and has written and lectured on this important pianist.

Assuredly Annie will be missed by her Archives Center co-workers and by musicologists, scholars, and others whom she has assisted in their Ellington and Strayhorn investigations. We will have more on her in our next issue.

Were You on the 9th Floor?

At Ellington 2000, did you seem seated in a "cold spot" during the banquet? See a strange image in a mirror? Feel the presence of an unknown "friend"?

A 60-minute "Haunted Hollywood" program on the Comedy Central television channel on Hallowe'en Day included a segment on the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, where we met for Ellington 2000 last May. Seems as if friendly ghosts (other than Casper) are around and about there. Thus, if, for instance, you stayed in Room 928 those strange sounds were not from faulty plumbing but rather a spiritual emanation of actor Montgomery Cliff. Also, if you stood in a certain spot in the room where the first Academy Awards took place, you experienced an unexplained chill. And there is a mirror where you may have seen a reflection of Marilyn Monroe, only to turn around and find no one there. All the ghosts, we are told, are friendly, however.

Well, all of us at the Conference can attest to the presence of Charlie Chaplin, and have photographs to prove it, too. So there, you doubters.

Rhoda and Jack Towers Honored, Fargo Celebrated on Special Broadcast

November marked both the 60th anniversary of the marriage of Jack and Rhoda Towers and of the famed Ellington performance at Fargo, so fortuitously recorded by Dick Burris and Jack. Little did these two young men suspect that what they were preserving would over the years increasingly become a favorite among Ellington cognoscenti. Jack and Rhoda had been married just several weeks earlier. So, in commemoration of both events Rob Bamberger invited Jack and Rhoda to be his guests on his "Hot Jazz Saturday Night" program on November 4.

For the broadcast, Jack brought several of his rare and favorite recordings, which Bamberger played, among them "I Should Care" spotlighting Hardwick and Carney and "Warm Valley" from a 1946 broadcast from Los Angeles' Lincoln Theater. Discussion included the forthcoming new Fargo CD, a Treasury series being prepared by Jerry Valburn and Jack, and Jack's varied sound engineering feats, among them his remastering/synchronization of two medleys recorded on different microphones by Victor in 1932.

The broadcast was on the night of our regular meeting, so we missed the broadcast. Luckily Ben Pubols, who was out of town, had timed his recorder and caught the whole thing. Jack has a reference tape of the program. A written summary of the program is available on the internet. Go to < www.wamu.org >, click on "Hot Jazz Saturday Night" and then "Source Notes" for November 4.

New Collection (Continued from page 1)

quite a bit of 1940s music. Also importantly, among the scores are those for such as *Racing World* and the *Latin American Suite*.

Given their absence in known extant sources, it generally has been assumed that Duke Ellington, constantly pre-occupied with the work currently in progress, was not concerned about preserving scores and band books for posterity. However, their richness and unusualness suggest that in entrusting certain of his manuscript music to granddaughter Gaye for safekeeping, he may have been well aware of their lasting value.

This contribution by Edward and Gaye Ellington further enriches the Ellington resources at the Smithsonian—the Ellington Collection itself and such related ones as the Ruth Ellington, Ted Shell, Apollo Theater, Cat Anderson, and several photograph accumulations.

In order that they may be served efficiently, persons wishing to examine any of the Archives' holdings are required to make an appointment. For information, contact the Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, 12th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20560-0601; phones: 202-357-4477 and 202-357-3270; fax: 202-786-2453; internet: < si.edu/archives/ac-i.htm >.

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

About Our Members

♫♫ November 18 was the "Big Final Night" for **Esther Williams** and her Trio at the Washington Plaza Hotel, an appearance that began as a short gig and was extended several times. Incidentally, Esther and **Geneva Hudson** sing with The Voices of Peoples, a recently formed choir that is attracting attention.

♫♫ An internet posting reports that a 2-CD set of Treasury Shows produced by **Jerry Valburn** has been released. The mastering was by **Jack Towers**, and the accompanying booklet notes are by Rob Bamberger.

♫♫ **John Hasse** has been speaking in academic venues recently. He gave a lecture-concert on "Ragtime, Blues and Jazz" at Walsh University and spoke on "Why We Need the Arts More Than Ever" at Lock Haven University.

♫♫ Two of our long-time members had birthdays recently, **Ted Shell** on October 26 and **Jack Towers** on November 15.

♫♫ Along with David Palmquist's, **Ben Pubol's** commentary on the Conference is printed in "Ellington 2000 - A TransAtlantic View" in the current issue of *Blue Light*.

♫♫ During his presentation at our November meeting, **Peter MacHare** shared a list of restorations, editings, transfers, masters, and engineered music by **Jack Towers**. A 4-page, single-spaced copy is available on the internet at: < allmusic.com >. The range of musicians whose music he has worked on is truly eclectic, from Albert Ammons to the Blue Sky Boys to the Boswell Sisters to Sidney Bechet to the Masters of Turkish Music and on and on and on—including, of course, Ellington and Strayhorn.

Pubols Lectures at New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts

Taking time out from a scientific conference he was attending, Ben Pubols lectured on Duke Ellington to the jazz and classical performance students at the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts (the same high school that Wynton Marsalis attended). His talk was at the behest of classical composer Steven Danker, who teaches at the Center and whose works have been performed by the Washington National Symphony, among others.

Ben's presentation was to have included musical illustrations, but this was thwarted by a massive power failure half-way through Bubber Miley's solo on the first piece to be played, "Black and Tan Fantasy." Even without Duke's music, Ben found an appreciative audience in the two dozen or so faculty and students in attendance.

Play Santa!

Earn the gratitude of an acquaintance, friend, or loved one. As a holiday treat, give a membership in The Duke Ellington Society.

Floorshow Steals the Show

by Angela Grimmer, Secretary

Peter MacHare's November program spotlighted Ray Nance, one of the key members of the Ellington band during some of its greatest years.

Peter treated us to a mix of audio and video of Ray, beginning with Jack Towers' Fargo recordings of "Honeysuckle Rose" and "Wham." We heard some of Ray's feature numbers, including "Moon Mist," "Squeeze Me," and two versions, early and late, of "Just A-Settin' and A-Rockin'." Beyond Ray's virtuosity with the violin and trumpet, when we saw the videos an extra dimension or two were added to the mix, as Ray demonstrated why he was called "Floorshow" in such numbers as "He Huffed and Puffed."

One of the most fascinating recordings was "Duplexity," an unstructured "free" duet with Lee Konitz, no rhythm section. Ray held his own, becoming more assertive as the tune moved along, although it was somewhat like a conversation consisting of an exchange of nonsequiturs.

Peter gave us a most enjoyable evening, showing us the many Ray Nances.

See a Star?

Look at your mailing label. If you see a star ☆ beside your name, you are a present, past, or prospective member who should hurry and get your dues in for the 2001 calendar year.

We have no increase in dues; they remain: Renewing Member, \$30; First-time-ever Member, \$20; Couple, \$50; and Student, \$5. What bargains!

You can pay at our meetings, by way of any officer or board member, or by mail to PO Box 15591, Washington, DC 20003, USA. If you use a check, make it payable to The Duke Ellington Society.

For your convenience, we had included a membership form in this issue.

THE DUKE ELLINGTON SOCIETY

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