



# Ellingtonia

Newsletter Of  
*The Duke Ellington Society*

Volume IX, Number 2

**FEBRUARY 2001**

Theodore R. Hudson, Editor

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## Acknowledgement

*We thank Granville Hurley, Jr., for permitting us to use, above, his father's 1940s photograph of Duke Ellington at the Howard Theater stage door.*

## Talk About Jazz

As we prepare this issue, the first week of Ken Burns' *Jazz* is being aired. In various media, discussion about it by critics, commentators, and devotees of jazz in its many forms began a while back, intensified just before the first segment was shown, and likely will not abate until some time after the series ends.

For publication here, we welcome—no, urge—you to send us your brief comments, opinions, and observations about the film and/or your reactions to others' views. To make our next issue, get your contribution in by February 3. Send it to the Editor by snail-mail: PO Box 15591, Washington, DC 20002, USA; by e-mail: < thudson681@aol.com >; or by fax: 301-585-9204. If you have in mind a more-than-brief critique/review, check with the editor first. Thanks.

## February Program: Rich Ehrenzeller on Charlie Barnet and "The Duke's Idea"

by Mac Grimmer and Peter MacHare, Program Coordinators

Charlie Barnet's was the first white band to play the Apollo Theater, in the early 30s. One of the reasons his was the first is because of the main musical influence on the young Barnet and his band, Duke Ellington. Throughout his career, Barnet spent a good deal of time re-creating and re-casting Duke's music. In time, as Charlie's band developed and found its own identity, it moved away from imitation to interpretation, but nevertheless, his focus remained on Ellingtonia. He loved playing the Johnny Hodges parts himself and writing tunes like "The Duke's Idea," in the Ellington style. (He also wrote "The Count's Idea," for Basie, and "The Wrong Idea," a parody of the sweet bands, as well as "The Right Idea," which he certainly had.) As well as re-creating, he also anticipated Ellingtonia, for in the late 40s he jump-started Clark Terry's career by bringing him from St. Louis to join the band, and one of Clark's features with Barnet was "Caravan"!

Rich Ehrenzeller, Ellington expert and the resident discographer of the New York Ellington Society, will be in town in February to present a program on the Ellington-Barnet connection. Rich recently explored this relationship in a talk before the New York chapter, and in Los Angeles at the Ellington 2000 conference last spring.

The time is 8 pm, Saturday, February 3, at our regular meeting place, the Grace Lutheran Church, 16th & Varnum Sts, NW. We're fortunate Rich could come down for our meeting to further enlighten us on Charlie Barnet's fascination with "The Duke's Idea."

## Williams, Yarborough, Elliston, Wells To Perform in 10th East Coast Jazz Festival

Among the headliners in the Annual East Coast Jazz Festival, February 14-18, are vocalist Ronnie Wells, pianist Ron Elliston, and (our members) saxophonist Davey Yarborough and vocalist Esther Williams. The event benefits the Fish Middleton Jazz Scholarship.

### *The Duke Ellington Society*

Cordially Invites You To Attend

### An Evening Of ELLINGTON and STRAYHORN Music

Featuring

The Ronnie Wells  
And Ron Elliston Sextet

Saturday, May 5, 2001, 8 PM  
Grace Lutheran Evangelical Church  
16th and Varnum Streets, NW, Washington, DC  
Proceeds Support The Society's Student Fund

\$15 Per Person

For Advance Tickets, Contact Patricia Braxton At:  
202-269-5960 / pbraxton@hotmail.com

## Members Thanked for Length and Quality of Service

Jack Towers and, jointly, Angela and Mac Grimmer were cited for special awards "In Grateful Appreciation For Sustained Exemplary Service To The Duke Ellington Society" at our annual Holiday Party on January 6. In his remarks, Ted Hudson stressed the two descriptive criteria of their service—uninterrupted length and quality. Also, he suggested that at least one special award be made each year, the criteria for which be determined each time by the president in office.

Jack has been a faithful and dependable member for over three decades, having served with distinction on our Board and as Treasurer for many of those years. Throughout, he has been a willing and reliable unofficial audio-visual consultant and de facto audio-visual engineer for us. Jack has given numerous programs for our meetings, usually of rare music well recorded; in fact, he made one such presentation even before he became a member. He is well known for his sharing of both his vast knowledge, technical know-how, and extensive collection of music, artifacts, and photographs. Perhaps above all, Jack Towers has always been an exemplar of warmth, generosity of spirit, selflessness, innate congeniality, and, we must say, unwarranted humility.

Angela and Mac, curious after having seen in media mention of our hosting the 1989 Annual International Ellington Study Conference at the Mayflower Hotel, stopped by just after the banquet when the music began, where they were welcomed, especially by our members Gerry and John Hornsby of Canada. Soon thereafter they joined, and since have consistently supported and been involved in all of our activities. Both have served on our elected Board over a number of years. Because of her dependability and efficiency, Angela has repeatedly been elected Secretary; for some time Mac has been our imaginative and resourceful Program Coordinator (although he began last year as Co-Coordinator). Before the activation of our Membership Committee, they, together, handled such matters themselves. Then too, for some years the pair voluntarily saw to the refreshments at our meetings. Angela and Mac willingly worked on our Ellington '99 celebration, including both as Program Committee members and Mac as coordinator of the Ellington's Washington tour. Both contribute to every issue of *Ellingtonia*.

We have benefitted immensely from *sustained* and *exemplary* service by Angela, Mac, and Jack.

## Hey, They Had To Tell Him, "Otto, Make That Riff Staccato"

When Jack Towers was asked to bring a few of his favorite recordings to his November guest appearance on Ron Bamberger's "Hot Jazz Saturday Night" broadcast, he included "I Should Care," with its beautifully lilting interplay by Otto "Toby" Hardwick and Harry Carney. A coincidental string of postings about Hardwick on Andrew Homzy's Duke-LYM web site remind us that although there are relatively few recordings of him soloing, there are enough instances plus obligatos to renew our admiration of his artistry. His tone, especially, is treasured by Otto-philes. It has been described as "creamy" and "silky," to which we humbly add "liquid" (but not limp, mind you).

In his contribution to the internet discussion, our member Ken Steiner in response to a question about who played the beginning of the second section of the early "Black and Tan Fantasy," said that it is indeed Hardwick and even though it may not qualify as a solo, "to me it is one of the greatest moments in jazz." Ben Pubols' contribution was a chronological list of Hardwick's solos, c. 1924-1946, among them "Sophisticated Lady" (Columbia U.K.), "In a Sentimental Mood" (Brunswick), and the obligato to Lawrence Brown on "All Too Soon" (Victor 1940). Richard Ehrenzeller noted that the Otto Hardwick Quartet plays "Come Sunday" and "I Remember Your Eyes" on a recent reissue, the *Wax's Sessions* LP (Crystal Records 12.503).

After leaving the band, Hardwick came back to make his home back in the Washington, DC area. Long-time members of the Duke Ellington Society remember that he was a member. Juanita Hardwick was our second president. We touched base with our members Don McCathran and Bill Flemons, both friends of Toby (as they called him) who, along with Terrell Allen and others, served as pallbearers at his funeral. Don feels especially fortunate to have been such a close personal friend of Toby, particularly in his last days. To him, Toby was a wonderful guy, more than just in relation to music. The two of them enjoyed each other's company, going to ball games, seeing the band when it was in the area, visiting in each other's homes, and generally buddying around. Don learned much about the band's lore from Toby, who had a fantastic memory of the band's historic minutiae. Bill Flemons, who also admired Toby as a person, considers "All Too Soon" one of his favorites. As to his musical training, Bill says that Toby was among those in Duke's early bands who sight-read very well. Toby, he says, created the bridge for "Black and Tan Fantasy." And Bill remembers reading somewhere that Duke said that Toby at one time had a band that outplayed his.

In *MIMM*, Duke describes Otto as "Mr. C Melody, and nobody ever quite captured the overall illusion of his sound." Further, he says that Otto added baritone to his "accessories" and was an inspiration to Harry Carney: "When Harry heard Toby play baritone, he ran, not walked, to the nearest baritone saxophone, went to work mastering it, and has never looked back." As to his leaving music as a profession, Duke says that when Otto, "a man of unusual quality," went back to Washington, it was "to be with and look out for his people."

Otto, we're glad you made your licks legato!

(Ed. Note: For more about Toby, and corollarily about Don and Bill, see "Don and Bill Fondly Remember Their Good Friend Toby" by Jack Towers in our May 1997 newsletter.)

## Short Sheets . . .

♪♪ Not our definition of priceless: Peter MacHare noticed on the e-bay internet auction site an Alice Babs LP that was up to \$202.50, with just less than an hour before the closing of bids. He asks, "We've all got that LP, right?" ♪♪ We have heard that Don Miller has been in the hospital and that info about and messages to him can go through his grandson at < Grantswi@aol.com >. ♪♪ An announcement of Brian Gilmore's *Jungle Nights and Soda Fountain Rags: Poems for Duke Ellington and the Duke Ellington Orchestra* is in the latest *DEMS Bulletin*. (See our review by Marjorie Hooper in our November 2000 issue.) ♪♪ The new Fargo CD, now available in Scandinavia, is scheduled for release in the US in March.

## Tucker Memorial to Take Place In New York City on February 2

A public memorial service for Mark Tucker will be held at St. Peter's Church, 619 Lexington Avenue, New York City, on Friday, February 2, at 7:30 pm.

His family and some colleagues and friends gathered at his home in Williamsburg, Virginia, on December 17 to express their love and admiration of Dr. Tucker.

## My Trip to Marciac

by Davie Yarborough

Last August, the New Washingtonians Jazz Orchestra (NWJO) from the Duke Ellington School of the Arts, under the direction of Davey Yarborough, was invited to France for the third time in three years to take part in one of their many jazz festivals. This year, the NWJO performed in the Marciac Jazz Festival.

The plane trip was about eight hours to Paris, where we arrived only to get on a bus that would take us directly to Marciac. We stayed at a French chateau where communication was limited because not many of the people staying there spoke English, and as a whole, we didn't speak much French. Our bus driver, Alphonse, who knew five or six languages, drove us to concerts and helped translate during our stay in France.

Most of the oncerts the NWJO performed took place during the day, and at night we attended concerts by some of the world's finest. These include Regina Carter and Charles Floyd. The NWJO were a bit apprehensive about the French food, so most of us ate the food we knew about like le McDonalds, le Poulet (chicken), and les frites (French fries). On the last few days we were there, we went sightseeing. We drove to the Pyrenees Mountains, where we stopped near several gift shops and took pictures of mountains and a waterfall.

It was a wonderful experience for all of us.  
(Ms. Yarborough is one of our Society's student members.)

## President Emeritus Gives Rare Ellington Recordings to DEMS

Ted Shell has donated 14 cassettes of "treasures" to DEMS. Recipient Sjef Hoefsmit reports that 10 of them contain "totally unknown recordings." Most of the music is from Carter Baron Amphitheatre engagements, circa 1967. According to Sjef, "These recordings are not mentioned in any of the discographies and the quality is much better than I expected." One on, Duke welcomes members of our Society. Sjef asks if anyone in Washington can help pinpoint its date.

In addition to the Duke's orchestra, Coleman Hawkins, Ella Fitzgerald, Oscar Peterson, Zoot Sims, Benny Carter, and Louis Armstrong are on the tapes, and there is a dialogue with Armstrong. For a detailed listing, see "New Finds," page 4, in *DEMS Bulletin* 2000/4.

## By-Laws Changes in Effect

Revisions of our Constitution and By-Laws unanimously adopted at our December meeting include the changing of our fiscal year to coincide with our calendar membership year; the changing of dates for elections and of terms of elected officers and board members so as to coincide with the calendar year; and a provision for amendments to be acted on in two rather than in three meetings. An essentially typographical change is the dropping of the appellation "Chapter 90" from our name so as to be in accordance with our legal name.

Further, while not a by-laws change, members approved the continuation of the present elected officers and board beyond June, when their terms would end, until December 31, 2001, when officers and board members will have been chosen in keeping with the new by-laws elections schedule.

## MIMM Index Is Free

Jørgen Mathiasen of Denmark has invited interested persons to feel free to copy from the internet two files that comprise his "Index to *Music Is My Mistress*." The address: < home0.inet.tele.dk/jurian-M/depages/deconten.htm >. The list includes titles of music, names of persons, pictures, and selected places and band names. Some persons and tunes with alternate titles are cross-referenced. Also helpful is a key to descriptive abbreviations. Duke is indexed only in instances in which he is in a picture.

The Ellington and Strayhorn community is fortunate that Mr. Mathiasen is so generous, for H.F. Huon's 1980 index has long been out of print.

## Quotation of the Month

*After Strayhorn, I believe Charles Mingus was the next great Ellingtonian -- in a compositional sense of course.*

— Andrew Homzy, in a Duke-LYM internet posting

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

### About Our Members

♪♪ The current issue of the Duke Ellington Society of Sweden's *Bulletin* contains an excerpt from **Frank Turner's** review of *Jazz: The First Century*, edited by **John Hasse**. The review appeared in our November issue. ♪♪ Duke said, "Beauty without utility is futility." Such is certainly not the case with **Yvonne C. Condell**, who as we noted in a recent issue, recently was a full-page model for an AARP advertisement in such publications as *Newsweek*, *The New Yorker*, *US News and World Report*, *USA Today*, and the *New York Times*. We now congratulate her on having earned the 2000 Distinguished Service Award "for excellence in professional and community leadership and commitment to Minnesota State University Moorhead." Ah, beauty and utility! ♪♪ In the mailing of our last issue, **Ted Shell** enclosed a thinking-of-you note to **Don McCathran**, for whom the distance from his home and night driving have made it difficult for him to regularly attend our meetings. In a reply Don said, "I do miss all the meetings and friends of the Society. Some of the happiest times of my life have been with the Ellingtonians and especially the personal warmth and hospitality that you have always shown." ♪♪ A new review of **Janna Steed's** book, *Duke Ellington: A Spiritual Biography*, is in the October issue of *Theology Today*, the first religious publication that has reviewed it.

## Volunteering Is Its Own Reward

The Smithsonian's Archives Center has an annual breakfast reception for its Behind-the-Scenes Volunteers. This time, each was asked to make a brief statement about discoveries made while performing their duties. Ben Pubols told of finding in the Ellington Collection a program for a Watergate concert sponsored by the Baker's Dozen in 1947, which he remembers as the first time he saw the orchestra live. Also, he found among the photographs two that he had taken at a college dance in Logan, Utah on 15 March 1958 and presented to Duke at the Starlight Ballroom in Hershey, Pennsylvania on 24 July 1965. And there's more: Ben came upon the telegram sent to the White House 29 April 1969 reading "Congratulations and Best Wishes, Ben and Lillian Pubols."

## Strayhorn Songs, Inc. Announces Business Changes

In what is described as "a realignment as a result of a number of business initiatives" Billy Strayhorn Songs, Inc. has suspended publication of scores/charts in its Manuscript Editions catalog. In an effort for greater availability of the music, Songs now has a co-publishing agreement with Dream Works Publishing. A current initiative is a songbook of Strayhorn compositions. To better know the public's wants, a Music Use Survey is being used.

## January Party Ends The Holiday Season

by Angela Grimmer, Secretary

The holiday season ended with a party, our annual winter celebration of Ellingtonia. The festivities took place in the Party Room of the Park Sutton in Silver Spring, thanks to the good graces of President Teddy and First Lady Geneva Hudson. A large turnout of members and guests enjoyed an evening of good food, comradery and conviviality, as well as the incomparable music of Duke Ellington. Teddy presented certificates of appreciation to all the contributors to the newsletter, as well as special awards to Jack Towers for his many industrious years in the world of Ellingtonia, and to Mac and Angela Grimmer. After a little dancing and a little more carousing, we adjourned the festivities, hopefully for no longer than the six months until our summer picnic.

## What! You Still See a Star!

The star ☆ on your mailing label means that although we are already into the Millennium Year, 2001, we are still anxiously waiting for you, a stellar prospect, to join us.

Despite rising costs, we have held the line on dues: Renewing Member, \$30; Couple, \$50; First-Time-Ever Member, \$20; and Student, \$5.

Mail your check payable to The Duke Ellington Society to PO Box 15591, Washington, DC 20003-0787, USA; send it by a member; or pay at our next meeting. You will be glad you did. Thanks.

## Back Copies Available

For back copies of our newsletter, just send a self-addressed and stamped envelope and indicate the specific issue/s you want. We have at least several copies of most editions.

## For Stimulating News, Views, and a Great Ellington/Strayhorn Database. . .

Regularly check Peter MacHare's "Duke Ellington Panorama" at: < [geocities.com/BourbonStreet/Square/2660/](http://geocities.com/BourbonStreet/Square/2660/) >.

### THE DUKE ELLINGTON SOCIETY

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