

# Ellingtonia

Newsletter Of  
*The Duke Ellington Society*



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Theodore R. Hudson, Editor

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## Member Geneva Perry Dies

Musician, teacher, and civic leader Geneva Perry died on March 27 after a short illness. She had been taken to Howard University Hospital the week before, then transferred to Lynn House, a Christian Scientist facility in Alexandria, Virginia, where she died. As she had stipulated, no service was held for her.

Our president, Peter MacHare, stated, "This is very sad news. Geneva was certainly a live wire. She added a lot to our meetings. What a lady!"

Though best known to most of us as a former saxophonist with the legendary International Sweethearts of Rhythm orchestra, Geneva Perry was known to others also for leadership in educational, civic, and church affairs. Just last year she won the NAACP Award for Community Service. Washington-born, she worked tirelessly on community projects, including publishing a newsletter, *LeDroit Park Sentinel: A Common Sense Approach to Preservation*. At her Third Church of Christ Scientist, Geneva Perry oversaw the planning and operation of its sound system, wrote handbooks for staff and members, and otherwise engaged in the life of the church. She was an adviser for the Howard Theatre Project. Geneva Perry did not allow her blindness to stop her involvement in such activities.

Ms. Perry earned a bachelor's degree in music at Virginia State University and studied early childhood education on the graduate level at the University of Maryland. She had an enviable reputation as an educator, including service in North Carolina, DC, and New York. As her vision began to fail, she retired from her position as elementary school teacher in Fairfax County, VA. A number of professional musicians referred to her gratefully and respectfully as "Teacher."

Donations may be made in Geneva Perry's memory to the For Love of Children Foundation, 1711 - 14th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001.

A tribute coordinated by a dear friend will take place at the Sumner School Museum, 17th and M Sts, NW, Washington, DC at 1 pm on Friday, April 19.

## Clark Terry Redux

by Mac Grimmer and Peter MacHare, Program Coordinators

Ted Shell proudly notes that he has some 14,000 items in his Ellington collection. We have been the beneficiaries of that collection many times. In May, Ted will present the second part of his program on Clark Terry. It is indeed a pleasure to get an in-depth look at a great artist.

Clark, born in 1920, began his career in the St. Louis jazz scene and played in a Navy band during World War II. Afterwards the war, he had stints in the bands of Charlie Barnet and Count Basie before playing with Ellington for almost all of the 1950s. Clark even spent some time in the Tonight Show Orchestra and remains busy to this very day.

The May Program will take place at 8 pm on Saturday, May 4 at our regular meeting place, Grace Lutheran Church, 16th and Varnum Streets, NW.

## TDES Sponsors Concert Of Unearthed Strayhorn Music

On Saturday, April 28, "Something to Live For—American Premieres of Unknown and Rare Strayhorn Works" will be performed by an all-star orchestra directed by Michael Hashim, commissioned by TDES, the New York Ellington organization.

Music to be performed in the concert was discovered among Strayhorn estate and Smithsonian holdings by Walter van de Leur during his years of research for his recently released book, *Something to Live For: The Music of Billy Strayhorn*. He prepared the music for this concert and will make the trip over from The Netherlands for the occasion.

The orchestra includes such luminaries as Bill Easley, Kenny Washington, and Ellington band alumnus Art Baron. Leader Hashim has made two CDs of Strayhorn music.

It will all take place at 9 pm, Saturday, April 27, at St. Peter's Church, 54th Street and Lexington Avenue, New York City. Admission is \$25. Tickets may be purchased in advance and at the door.

## Carnegie Revisited

by Ken Steiner

Producer Carl Hallstrom's instructions for writing the liner notes to Storyville's recent CD issue of *Duke Ellington Live at Carnegie Hall Dec. 11, 1943* were simple. "Look up contemporary reviews. Write as much as you want." Carl later admitted he didn't think he'd have to get the booklet expanded to 24 pages. That's the way it is with researching Ellington. Every answer raises more questions. If I had a chance to re-write the notes, here are some things I would add.

**Duke's Anger at the Criticism of *BB&B*** Duke's return to Carnegie Hall in December of 1943 can only be understood in response to his historical debut at Carnegie (and premiere performance of *Black, Brown and Beige*) in January of 1943. In the notes I referred to John Hasse's quote of Ruth Ellington that Duke was withdrawn and quiet after the negative response to *BB&B*. I wondered if this told the full story of Duke, a complex person. Leonard Feather, in *The Jazz Years: Earwitness to an Era*, confirmed what I had suspected, "Duke was both depressed and angry that his masterwork received mixed reviews." Eleven months later, Duke's announcements thinly mask his anger as he gets in a few jabs at his detractors.

**Strayhorn to the Rescue** A flu bug had hit the East Coast just prior to the concert, and the Ellington Orchestra was not immune. Juan Tizol performed only his section parts, and his feature on "Pyramid" was cancelled. The replacement? Two standards, "Tea for Two" and "Honeysuckle Rose," both having been recently recorded for World Transcriptions. Walter van de Leur confirmed for me after my deadline and before the publishing of his remarkable work *Something to Live For* that both tunes were arranged by Strayhorn.

**Salute to Fats** Three days after the second Carnegie concert, the composer of "Honeysuckle Rose," Thomas "Fats" Waller suddenly passed away. Ellington and the Orchestra were on the road and missed Fats' Harlem funeral, but Duke's next trip to Carnegie was for a Salute to Fats Waller on April 2, 1944. Duke performed "Sophisticated Lady" and "Dancers in Love" in a solo tribute to his fellow pianist-composer.

**Junior Raglin, Guitar** Right under my eyes in Paul de Barros' excellent book, *Jackson Street After Hours: the Roots of Jazz in Seattle*, Junior Raglin's Seattle years in the 1930's are recounted. Pianist-bandleader Palmer Johnson said, "Junior could play guitar and walk the dog on a bass." No wonder Raglin was able to fulfill the difficult task of filling Jimmie Blanton's role.

**New World A-Comin' or Coming?** The program lists the composition as "New World A-Coming." Roi Ottley's book was titled the same way. On Duke's spoken introduction, he clearly articulates the "g." However, a piece of sheet music in Duke's hand (in the Carnegie archives) is titled "New World A Comin'." My conclusion? Either is correct.

**NWAC the Final Movement of *BB&B*?** Barry Ulanov in his biography of Duke cites a Dallas newspaper in 1933 that quoted Duke on his projected "negro [sic] suite" in "five parts." Duke said, "I shall look into the future for the fifth and last movement, probably a hundred years from now, and give a recapitulation, an apotheosis aiming to put the negro [sic] in more comfortable place among the people of the world and a return to something he lost when he became a slave." Compare this with Duke's introduction of NWAC at its premiere at the second Carnegie concert, "We accepted the title (of Ottley's book) as a possibility and very optimistically anticipated this better condition ... we have a very contented feeling in 'New World A-Coming.'"

My sincere thanks to The Duke Ellington Society. I first realized the vastness of Ellington's work years ago when Jack Towers showed me his collection. Jack performed his usual magic in transferring the original glass acetates to digital tape. Jerry Valburn, who attended the concert and provided the original recordings for this CD, encouraged me to "write about what I hear in the concert" and "have fun." Ted Hudson was kind enough to read the draft, and gave me the benefit of his experience. To all my friends in DC and beyond, I hope my liner notes add to your enjoyment of the CD. I welcome your feedback.

## Multi-Category Achievements

A couple issues back, we mentioned that our member Dr. Steve Mokoney in 1988 was inducted in the Commonwealth Sports Hall of Fame, having had a legendary career in professional football (called soccer in America and certain other places), playing mainly in England and Holland. A street in Amsterdam and a main tribune (comparable to our box or suite section) in a new stadium in Holland are named for him. An internet search for Steve Mokoney and specifically, for < [www.zwartemeteor.nl](http://www.zwartemeteor.nl) > will turn up dozens of postings about him and links to other websites. A film about him, *De Zwarte Meteor*, premiered in Amsterdam just last December.

After his sports career, Steve came to the United States to attend Rutgers University, and is now a practicing clinical psychologist. After coming as a guest of Joe and Olivia McMillan at one of our meetings, he joined, being a knowledgeable lover of Ellington and Strayhorn music in particular as well as of "jazz" in general.

Dr. Mokoney has had a socially and politically interesting life. Originally from South Africa as is she, Steve has for some time been a friend of vocalist Sathima Bea Benjamin. He baby-sat Josephine Baker's children, was a classmate of Bishop Tutu and Miriam Makeba, and in 1997 was appointed Goodwill Ambassador of Tourism by then President of South Africa Nelson Mandela.

Unassuming and soft spoken, Dr. Mokone is the type of person one would hardly guess has accomplished so much in such varied fields of endeavor.

## Last Set at the Vanguard

by Mac, Angela, and Jenny Grimmer

We were late, and Clark Terry was already halfway through the last set. It was Tuesday, February 12, his opening night at the Village Vanguard, and when we got down the stairs there was the cherubic Clark, perched up on a stool in the apex of the triangular room, in the middle of his quintet. "Over the Rainbow" had already been taken apart, and we were just in time to hear it being put back together by the flugelhorn, with a familiar, mellow tone.

The next tune was "My Romance," which turned out to be a chase between Clark and his tenor player, David Glasser. CT usually led the way, and it was back and forth all the way around the block, until they finally got back home again. Then Clark acknowledged a few musicians in the audience, including Plas Johnson, James Williams, Jon Faddis and Lew Soloff; inviting someone to come up and play, he launched into a riff for a couple of minutes, then gave it up. He laughed, "Well, I guess nobody wants to sit in, so we'll just go ahead with the next number." Then he noticed Faddis, horn in hand and standing beside the large column next to the bandstand. Clark said, "Oh! Jon Faddis! You know what I want to hear Jon play? 'West End Blues!'"

Jon feigned shock, responding, "Thanks a lot, Clark!" and rolled his eyes, for "West End Blues" is from Louis Armstrong's Hot Five days, being one of the solos which established Armstrong's reputation. But Jon was ready, and Clark knew Jon was ready, since Faddis knew Louis' solos from doing Armstrong in repertoire. He had done this tune a few years ago at the Kennedy Center with Doug Richards' band, and probably since. Then the band started playing, and Jon sailed through Louis' solo, which sounded as fresh and exciting today as it must have in 1928. Clark's blues vocal went,

*I've been around a long time, and paid a lot of dues.*

*Oh, yes, I've been around a long time and paid a lot of dues.*

*But I ain't never heard no lyrics to the tune called "West End Blues."*

Then he sang the lyrics to "West End Blues," which actually turned out to be "Mumbles." The flugelhorn then got turned upside down, Clark pushing the valves up with his knuckles. Jon had to follow suit, and for a minute there was an upside-down duet. At another point, after a Terry volley, Jon lowered his horn and said, "Now that's not nice!" Faddis eventually took the tune out, playing his own solo which ended up somewhere in the stratosphere, and maintaining his reputation as one of the most exciting trumpet players around.

Clark said, "Whew! That was really somethin'!" He was obviously tiring, and hadn't been feeling too well anyway, so he announced the last tune of the evening would be short. It wasn't. It was "Perdido," his feature number with Ellington's band. James Williams took over the piano, and after the first few bars a third trumpeter appeared, Lew Soloff, another Big Apple top gun. When Clark saw him, he immediately turned his horn upside down again, Faddis followed suit again, and Soloff could only do likewise. This continued briefly, THREE upside-down horns playing the melody, until Soloff, no doubt feeling somewhat constricted, righted his horn and cut loose. He played Clark's own solo on "Perdido," basically the one CT had first worked out 50 years ago when he first joined Duke's band! Clark joined in, and Soloff didn't stop; he and CT faced each other, eyeball to eyeball, ripping through the "solo" together, with Clark's horn either in unison or commenting on the situation. In case anybody didn't get it, Soloff said in an aside to the audience, "I'm playin' his solo!" Then after William's romping piano chorus, everyone took the tune out. That was the way the last set, and the evening, ended, right at the peak.

And this was just the opening night!

### "Come Sunday" in Denominational Hymnals

Duke's "Come Sunday" may be found in official hymnals of the Presbyterian Church USA and the United Methodist Church. The United Church of Christ's *New Century Hymnal* titles it "Savior God Above," with slightly different wording.

### Quiz Answers

Last month we asked for later, or alternate, titles for five Billy Strayhorn compositions. Here they are, followed by the answers. (a) "Lonely Again" = "Something to Live For," (b) "Elf" = "Isfahan," (c) "Haupe" = "Polly's Theme," (d) "Pretty Girl," = "Star-Crossed Lovers," and (e) "Lately" = "Half the Fun."

How about contributing a quiz for our next issue!

### Seeing Stars?

If you see two ☆☆ stars on your mailing label, it means we most cordially invite you to join us. It's easy; just send your dues to:  
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## "Dramatis Felidae" (To Use Our Man's Term in *MIMM*)

### About Our Members

#### Scott Schwartz

"The Cricket Sings a Merry Song: Music Ambiguity as Power of Self Empowerment" is the title of a paper presented by Scott Schwartz at the Appalachian Studies Association Conference in Helen, Georgia. He is currently working on a second book devoted to issues of gender identity and the achievement of gender equity for some women musicians of this community. Through their music performance they are empowered symbolically to exhort the word of God without violating the community's fundamental tenant that women cannot have authority over men.

#### Ben Pubols

As reported in various media, actions of Lawrence Small, new director of the Smithsonian Institution, have provoked spirited debate about the character and mission of that venerable institution. In particular, concerns have been expressed about the possibility of corporations and financially able contributors designating the nature and content of projects for which their money will be used and of their being "rewarded" by having buildings, facilities, and exhibits named after them. In "Museum and Big Money" in the March 17 issue of the *Washington Post Magazine*, Ben Pubols states that the new director, through his philosophy and managing style, is "... in effect putting the Smithsonian up for sale to the largest donors."

#### Jerry Valburn

At its annual convention, the International Association of Jazz Record Collectors presented Jerry Valburn the Meritorious Service Award for exceptional service. This recognition is not bestowed annually but only when the awards committee believes someone deserves the honor. Jerry is cited as "always an active and helpful member ... willing to go out of his way for the Association."

#### Esther Williams, Davey Yarborough

The husband-wife team of multi-instrumentalist Davey and vocalist Esther Williams-Yarborough are featured in an article, with a great photo of them, in the March *Washingtonian* magazine. Davey "filled the house" as the attraction on a Billy Taylor Jazz at the Kennedy Center program last year, and Esther's recent engagement at the Bohemian Caverns sold out.

## Don't Miss

### Duke Ellington Youth Project

**Art Exhibit** - Opening ceremony, 6 pm, Thursday April 11 and on view through April 19, Art Gallery, Eastern Market, 7th and North Carolina Ave, SE

**Festival** - Thursday, April 25, 7-9 pm, Carmichael Auditorium, National Museum of American History

**"Duke's Too Suite To Forget"** - Birthday tribute concert by The New Washingtonians, 7:30 pm, Friday, April 26 at the Ellington School of the Arts, 3500 R St, NW. Proceeds support the band's trip to New Orleans. Admission \$10, children under 13 free.

## Anything Goes

by Gina Rollins

Anything Goes was the theme of this year's Members' Choice meeting, on April 6. Highlights included a trans-Atlantic presentation from Belgium of "Dicty Glide" by our member Sjeff Hoefsmit. The piece, he noted, "was what made me decide to collect every Ellington record I could find. It seemed so promising for the future. Duke has never disappointed me after all these years."

Jack Towers shared a photograph he took of Wallace Jones, Barney Bigard and Tricky Sam Nanton the first time he met Duke: July 1939 at the Neptune Ballroom in Sioux Falls, SD. Years later, Jack brought the photo to another performance and had all the band members sign it.

From John Gray came a selection from the *Duke Ellington Songbook*: Sarah Vaughan adding her voice but no words to "Chelsea Bridge." In the category of performers NOT associated with Ellington, Peter MacHare brought Chuck Berry singing, "I'm Just a Lucky So and So." Ted Hudson combined Strayhorn in a small group featuring Nat Pierce, Scott Hamilton, and Bill Berry playing "Main Stem" and youth in an excerpt from "Cherokee" on a recent CD by The New Washingtonians. Ben Pubols challenged us to choose favorite sides of the Atlantic, with two versions of "Sophisticated Lady" made three months apart, one for British release, the other, American.

Alan Schneidmill stumped most of the audience with two trivia quizzes, real names of jazz artists (including Ellington alumnus 'Luigi Balisone,' better known as Louis Bellson) and artists named Harry or Harold. In case you were wondering, four lesser-known 'Harolds' associated with Ellington are: Country Jones, Money Johnson, Geezil Minerve, and Shorty Baker.

Ted Shell brought a tape he made from Duke's week-long engagement here at the Carter Barron Amphitheater in 1968. At the end, Duke acknowledged the 90 DES members in attendance. "We love you madly," he said.

And so do we, Duke

## THE DUKE ELLINGTON SOCIETY

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