

# Ellingtonia

Newsletter Of  
*The Duke Ellington Society*

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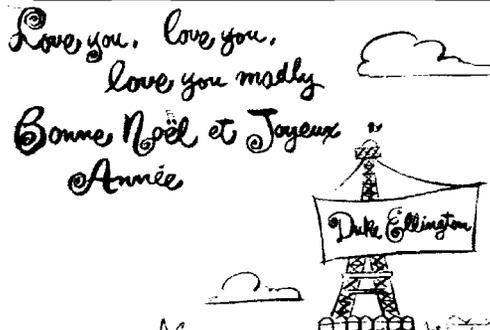


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Theodore R. Hudson, Editor

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Web Site: [depanorama.net/desociety/](http://depanorama.net/desociety/)



We thank Mac Grimmer for sharing with us this seasonal souvenir.

## DEMS Bulletin Available Online

Beginning in 2004, the Duke Ellington Music Society's *DEMS Bulletin*—edited, produced and distributed from Belgium by Sjef Hoefsmit—will be regularly published on Peter MacHare's popular "A Duke Ellington Panorama" internet site, at: < [www.depanorama.net/dems](http://www.depanorama.net/dems) >. As a convenience for persons without access to the web, Hoefsmit has organized a network of members who will download and print out copies for them.

The *Bulletin* was started in 1979 by DEMS founder Benny Åslund in Sweden, for "Serious Collectors, Researchers, and Students of Ellingtonia" worldwide. When Åslund died in 1996, his good friend Sjef Hoefsmit accepted responsibility for its continuation.

The *Bulletin* has announced, "... to reach more Ellington collectors in the world and to make it easier and less expensive for those who prefer the Internet to a printed Bulletin, we decided to accept gracefully Peter MacHare's offer to publish ... on his web site ... ." He has already posted the last issue of 2001, all of 2002, the first of 2003, and is busy on the next.

Published three times a year, *DEMS Bulletin* is without equal as a fount of discographical data, significant news and announcements, pertinent discourse, and expository articles, much of which is contributed by DEMS members and friends.

Famously generous with his time, encyclopedic knowledge, personal resources, and scholarly help, Sjef Hoefsmit foresees that *DEMS Bulletin*, as the April-July issue stated, will continue "as long as there are questions to be asked, answers to be given, and important news to be circulated."

## Two for the Price of One: Nicknames & Clarinet

by Mac Grimmer & Peter MacHare, Program Coordinators

Our December meeting will be quite a bargain. We will have two presentations for the price of one.

The first presentation, by Alan Schneidmill, will be about Nicknames in the music world. Alan has spent some months planning this presentation and is so sure that everyone will enjoy it that he is willing to refund transportation expenses to anyone who does not. Alan, from your presentations in the past, we are sure your bet is safe.

The second presentation will be a Member's Choice. We haven't given the clarinet the attention it deserves in our Member's Choice programs. Let's fix that right away. Prepare a short introduction and bring to our December meeting a favorite recording (or two!) featuring the clarinet. The recording must spotlight one of the Duke's men on clarinet, but it doesn't have to be with the Ellington orchestra. Thus, if you want to bring one of Barney Bigard with Louis Armstrong, you are encouraged to do so. Out-of-town members may mail their choices to our postal office address or call Peter MacHare directly.

Our December program will take place at our usual meeting place, **Grace Lutheran Church, 16th and Varnum Streets, NW at 8 pm on Saturday, 6 December**. We need a volunteer to bring refreshments (call Peter at 301-982-4249 if you can help).

Let's look forward to hearing some great Procope, Hamilton, Bigard, Hodges and ... And who? Well, it's your choice, that's who!

## Internet Addresses to Keep Handy

The Duke Ellington Society, Inc.:  
**[www.depanorama.net/dcsociety/](http://www.depanorama.net/dcsociety/)**

Ellington '04 Conference in Stockholm, Sweden:  
**[www.ellingtonsweden.com/](http://www.ellingtonsweden.com/)**

*DEMS Bulletin*:  
**[www.depanorama.net/dems](http://www.depanorama.net/dems)**

## Quotations for Your Consideration

Frequently we print a "Quotation of the Month." In this issue we include several for your comments.

*... despite his constant air of courtly nonchalance, Ellington was an extraordinarily hard worker, building up, over a period of half a century, a body of work whose dimensions we are only just beginning to perceive. . . .*

*... For a large part of his musical career, he wrote on average a new piece every fortnight. One has to go back to the Baroque masters of the 17th and 18th centuries to find a comparable rate of production.*

– Geoffrey James, "The Ellington Sound," *Blue Light* 10:3.

*Duke was a mystic. He told me that after he'd read the Bible, he knew everything he needed to know.*

– Tony Bennett, *The Good Life* [autobiography]  
Contributed by Mac Grimmer

*It seems to me that some of the young musicians I hear are trying to please older musicians like me. You are supposed to upset the generations before you – not make them feel content. Upset the Father and grow!*

– Phil Woods, *The Note*, November 2000

*You can take that off; I've played it a million times, know it backward. . . . my shining light—the man I quiver and shiver in front of, who makes me feel so small and unnecessary, the one man—is Mr. Ellington. Books have been written about him. . . . but I'm only supposed to review this record. The sole fact that Duke discovered and brought to light Jimmy Blanton is enough for me. . . . Just as true credit should go to the great Bird and Diz for a new sound in music, so equal credit must go to Blanton, who showed all of us hungry bass players the way out of the forest. I don't particularly dig bass solos, due to the instrument's frightful limitations, but the sound Jimmy got, whether with just Duke or with the big band, was the greatest sound to date from a bass. How well he would have teamed with Diz and Charlie, were he here today. . . . Three stars.*

– from a "Blindfold" test of Woody Herman bassist Chubby Jackson in *Metronome* magazine, December 1947. The tune is the Duke Ellington-Jimmie Blanton duet "Plucked Again."

## Day Dream : Variations on Strayhorn by Darius de Haas

(PS Classics PS204)

by Harry R. Nerlich

*This article first appeared in the Newsletter of the Duke Ellington Society of Toronto.*

*We are grateful to the Society and Mr. Nerlich for their permission for us to reprint it here.*

This young Chicagonian, son of bassist Eddie de Haas and singer Geraldine Bey (also nephew of Toronto's Salome Bey), was featured by the NYC chapter TDES at its Billy Strayhorn concert in May. That came after he presented a Strayhorn program at Lincoln Center, but before cutting this disc in June 2002.

He has appeared on Broadway—winning an Obie for his performance in *Running Man*—as well as in Carnegie Hall and England's Royal Festival Hall.

Possessed of a wide-vibratoed, high-tenor voice that soars into upper registers not usually associated with male singers, de Haas shows a special understanding of Strayhorn's music and lyrics. His accompanists, which range from solo piano through string filled orchestrations, set just the right mood for each song.

"My Love Is a Fever" and "Take All My Loves" are both from *Such Sweet Thunder*, with lyrics from Shakespearean sonnets that deter all but the most capable singers. De Haas handles the material delicately and effortlessly.

"A Flower Is a Lovesome Thing" opens with de Haas giving a nod toward the Hodges solo on "Passion Flower" then segues into a fully orchestrated strings and vibes backing of a passionate vocal rendition of the main theme.

"Your Love Has Faded," with solo piano backing, "Lush Life," with only soprano sax assistance, and "Something to Live For," with a guitar abetting the vocal, are top drawer versions of Strayhorn's better known songs.

"My Flame Burns," Strayhorn's last composition (called "Blood Count" then, but now with lyrics by Elvis Costello) is perhaps the highlight of the disc, although de Haas' interpretation of "Pretty Girl," with music and lyrics by BS—which became the wordless "Star Crossed Lovers" for *SST*—runs it a close second.

The disc closes with "Day Dream," on which the singer shows command of his full vocal range, and the accompanying orchestra adds lush harmonies.

## Short Sheets . . .

### Archives Center Moving

The Archives Center, repository of scores of collections, including the Ellington and related materials, is in the process of moving. The Center will remain in the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History on Constitution Avenue, but is being relocated from the second floor to a downstairs site. Because of the move, the Center will be unable to host our next meeting of our Society, as it had done each December for some years now.

### IAJRC Plans Convention in Copenhagen

The International Association of Jazz Record Collectors is looking forward to the presence of Ellington collectors at its annual meeting being planned for July of 2005 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

### "They Say"

In its account of Gregory Peck's funeral in June, the *Los Angeles Times* said, "As he did at the funeral of Duke Ellington, [Brock] Peters sang an Ellington song, 'They Say': 'They say that people turn into stars when they die, and live again in the midnight sky . . .'"

### Ron Collier, 1930-2003

Ron Collier, collaborator with Ellington on several projects, including *The River* and the recording *Duke Ellington North of the Border*, died in his native Canada in October.

### Steve Hancoff Takes the Music to the Far East

Ellington and Strayhorn guitar specialist Steve Hancoff is on the road again, this time to the Far East, appearing with banjoist Bud Wachter in Taiwan, Indonesia, China, Mongolia. You can keep up with him via the internet at < [www.stevhancoff.com](http://www.stevhancoff.com) >.

## Releases and Reissues

Good news for fans of the LPs *Ellington Uptown*, *Masterpieces by Ellington*, *Piano in the Foreground*, *Piano in the Background*, *Blues in Orbit*, and *Festival Session*: Columbia is preparing their availability in CD format.

Completists will want to know that Bluebird reportedly has released *The Far East Suite*, including previously unissued alternative takes.

Image has announced a new DVD video, *Intimate Duke Ellington*. According to a description on the DVD Planet internet site, it is comprised of two programs for Danish television, one of a octet from the orchestra and the other essentially Duke as soloist with rhythm.

Audiophile is reissuing as a CD *Herb Jeffries: Tributes to Nat King Cole and Bing Crosby*, originally Dobre LPs.

### Contact Information for Ellington '04 Stockholm, Sweden, May, 2004:

Sponsor: The Duke Ellington Society of Sweden  
Address: Skogstorpsvägen 39, 191 39 Sollentuna, Sweden  
Email: [goran.wall@ellingtonsweden.com](mailto:goran.wall@ellingtonsweden.com)  
Web Page: <http://www.ellingtonsweden.com/>  
Phone: 0046-8- 965234 fax: 0046-8-965234  
Also, see the insert (pages 3-4) in our November 2003 issue.



*Did you know that in 1928 vocalist Ozzie Ware recorded "Santa Claus Bring My Man Back" accompanied by Duke Ellington's Hot Five consisting of Arthur Whetsof, Barney Bigard, Billy Taylor on tuba., and Duke.*

## Strayhorn To Be Celebrated in Exhibit, Talks, and Concert at NYC's Davis Hall

A photographic show, "Strayhorn's Harlem," will run December 3-January 24 at the Aaron Davis Hall in New York City. The exhibit is presented by Davis Hall in collaboration with the Schomburg Center.

A panel on December 3, "Community Dialogue—Strayhorn on Convent Avenue," by pianist John Hicks and guests will focus on Strayhorn's music and his time spent in Harlem. Then, on December 6, "My Little Brown Book," music by Hicks and a group of multi-instrumentalists will, according to advance notice, "display the delicacy and timelessness of Billy Strayhorn's extraordinary compositions."

## "...He Would Turn Around In a Minute and Smile"

His granddaughter Gaye Ellington says about her posthumous "Heritage: EKE," an acrylic on canvas, color portrait of Duke:

*Ever since my grandfather died, many artists have done representations of him. They were what other people saw in my grandfather. When I looked at them, they didn't express what I thought of him, and it disturbed me. . . . A lot of the photographs of him were very serious. I'm not saying he was always happy, but he would turn around in a minute and smile.*

The portrait is part of the Ellington materials at the Smithsonian. A reproduction of it may be seen on several internet sites. We were successful by making a search for "Duke Ellington portrait by Gaye Ellington."

## Answers to Last Month's Quick Quiz

In our November issue we invited our readers to fill in the following blanks about members of our Society. Here are the answers. Did anyone get all four?

1) \_\_\_\_\_ is a former Miss [major U.S. city].

Esther Williams-Yarborough was the winner in a Washington, DC talent and beauty contest.

2) \_\_\_\_\_ at one time was the chef on a television cooking series. Bertha "Bee" Pine's five-days-a-week show originating on KTVK in Phoenix was called "Moods in Foods."

3) \_\_\_\_\_ won first prize in a Washington Post photography competition.

Ted Shell was [Oops, correction: second prize] winner in the color category in one of the newspaper's annual photography competitions some years ago.

4) A major street in [major European city] is named after \_\_\_\_\_, a former sports star.

A street in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, is named in honor of Steve Mokone, internationally acclaimed former professional soccer/football star.

**"Dramatis Felidae"** (To Use Our Man's Term in *MIMM*)**About Our Members****Luvenia George**

Luvenia George continues her interdisciplinary music education activities. She spoke on "The Duke Ellington Youth Project: An Exemplar for Biography in History English, Arts and Science Classes" at the National Council of History Education Conference in Los Angeles. The week before she made a presentation at the DC Music Educators Fall Conference on the new Jazz Legacy Project. Also, she has developed with David Baker, president of the International Association of Jazz Educators, a curriculum on the Louis Armstrong Legacy.

**Ken Steiner**

Since its beginnings by Joe Igo over 20 years ago and carried on by Art Pilkington, Gordon Ewing, and others, scholarship on Duke's Itinerary continues, as it should, some revisionist, some supplementary, and some newly discovered. In the current issue of *DEMS Bulletin*, Ken Steiner contributes significantly to data about 1939-40, complementing his textual information with reproductions of news clippings, announcements, advertisements, photos, review excerpts, and other material from the era.

**Walter van de Leur**

The week-long visit from The Netherlands to the Smithsonian's Archives center this fall by Walter van de Leur and musician-musicologist-transcriber Robert Veen was not about Ellington or Strayhorn. The two studied music manuscripts and other materials in the Jimmie Lunceford holdings.

**Patricia Willard**

In the current *DEMS Bulletin* we learn that Patricia Willard is writing liner notes for Columbia re-issues. They are bound to be good! (See "Releases and Reissues," page 3.)

**Lance Travers and Jerry Valburn**

Lance Travers is working with Jerry Valburn on the completion of the latter's new Ellington CD book. Jerry says, "I originally asked him to be the book editor. I was so pleased to see his overall interest and throwing questions at me [that] were hard to answer, that I finally asked him to be co-author of this work."

**Ted Shell**

The expression "conspicuous absence" was vividly actualized at our last meeting: Ted Shell, who usually is the first on hand, was not feeling well enough to attend. Though he says he could be wrong, Ted does not recall ever having missed another meeting over the years. And he was one of our founders!

**The Rev. Janna Steed**

One delegate to the recent Iowa Episcopal Diocesan Convention said that Janna Steed "and her jazz group performed magnificently during the dinner and during the Eucharist this morning!" With the exception of hymns and responses, all the worship music for the occasion was from Ellington's Sacred Concerts.

**Jack & Jerry**

by Peter MacHare

We celebrated the partnership of Jerry Valburn and Jack Towers at our November meeting.

It was the kind of meeting you looked forward to for weeks. Jerry Valburn was to be in town. He and Jack Towers planned a special program for us, highlighting many of their music collaborations of the past 30 years (they met in 1971). We even got to hear excerpts from the New York TDES program featuring Jack and Jerry. At that program, Morris Hodara called Jack the "greatest restorer" and Jerry the "greatest collector" of Ellingtonia. We cannot disagree.

Musical highlights were many. "Ridin' on a Blue Note" from Canobe Lake Park (17 Aug 40) featured Johnny Hodges on soprano sax.

"Rose Room" (15 May 38) featured a piano introduction from Duke that eventually became "In a Mellow Tone" a few years later. We heard selections from the Fargo date ("Sepia Panorama" and "Across the



"The Two and Only"  
Jack and Jerry

Track Blues") as well as that wild version of "Rockin' in Rhythm" from the 1943 Carnegie Hall Concert, and, of course, material from the Duke Ellington Treasury Series—Duke Ellington's largest recording project.

But best of all, we visited with Jack and Jerry and celebrated a friendship forged in music. Thank you, Jack, thank you, Jerry, for music the world will treasure for generations to come.

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