

Ellingtonia

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Theodore R. Hudson, Editor

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New Washingtonians' Excellence Reaffirmed

Those who have heard them before expect great things of The New Washingtonians Jazz Orchestra (NWJO), directed by Davey Yarborough, and they were not disappointed by the orchestra's performance at their latest concert, at the Ellington School of the Arts in late January.

Billed as "Taking It Back to Europe," the matinee-and-evening event was a fundraiser for the orchestra, it having been invited to perform in major music events during the summer in Finland, Italy, and Canada. As we reported last fall, our Society has made a donation earmarked for the band's travel.

While the orchestra was the featured attraction, the audience was treated to a performance by piano soloist Joshua Davies and by affiliated groups in the school--the NWJO with Voices, directed by alumna Jessica Boykin-Settles; a Small Ensemble (remember Duke's small bands?); and NWJO With Strings led by faculty member Eddie Drennon. While they did not perform on this occasion, the school can boast of other music groups too, for example, the Chamber Orchestra directed by Drennan, the Ella Fitzgerald Fellows directed by Boykin-Settles, and, of course, the Concert Choir.

Among the NWJO's offerings were two Ellington classics, a spirited "C-Jam Blues" and a relaxed, groovy "I'm Just a Lucky So and So." They also successfully took on compositions by Coltrane, Rollins, Parker, Gershwin, and Miles Davis, among others.

While we collectively have made a donation to The New Washingtonians Jazz Orchestra, let's also support the Ellington School of the Arts in general and its specific initiatives and programs such as NWJO. To find out how and to learn more about the school, go online at www.EllingtonSchool.org or call 202-333-2555.

Two Ellington Videos

by Mac Grimmer, Peter MacHare, and Patricia Willard

For our March program, member Patricia Willard will present two Ellington videos, *Love You Madly* and *A Concert of Sacred Music at Grace Cathedral*. Patricia worked on both films as assistant to the producer, Ralph J. Gleason, and will offer behind-the-scenes stories. In *Music Is My Mistress*, Duke himself described *Love You Madly* as "the best film about Duke Ellington ever made."

The program will take place at our usual meeting place, **Grace Lutheran Church, 16th and Varnum Streets, NW** in Washington, DC at 8 pm on **Saturday, March 4**, and, of course is open to the public. This will be a memorable program, so be sure not to miss it.

Welcome, Rev. and Mrs. Kersey!

Grace Lutheran Church has a new pastor, the Reverend Clinton Kersey. He and his wife, Katherine, attended our February meeting.

Rev. Kersey is a native of the Washington area and a music lover who would like to see Ellington's sacred music performed one day at Grace Lutheran Church. This may be the start of a beautiful relationship.

Rev. and Mrs. Kersey, we love you madly and look forward to seeing you at our programs.

— Peter MacHare, President

East Coast Jazz Festival Offers More Free than Ticketed Events

Year in and year out the Annual East Coast Jazz Festival has offered an abundance of authentic jazz and this year, its fifteenth, is no exception. It all takes place at the DoubleTree Hotel Rockville in Maryland, 16-20 February.

Get the schedule and see for yourself. Download a copy from www.fmjseastcoastjazz.com, or phone 301-933-1822; or write to FMJS at PO Box 1768, Silver Spring, MD 20915-1768 for one.

(Continued on page 3 under "East Coast Jazz Festival")

Duke Ellington by David Bradbury

(London: Haus Publishing, 2005. 183 pages.)

Reviewed by Ben Pubols

This short book—183 pages—provides a brief introduction to Duke, his life and music. There is not a lot new here, but the book is well organized. Although Bradbury lives in London, it is clear from both the text and the acknowledgements that he spent a lot of time in the United States researching the book, including visits to both the Smithsonian Institution and the Rutgers Institute of Jazz Studies.

There are several unique features which add to the readability of the book. One is a twenty-page Chronology showing, side by side, events in Duke's life and concurrent historical and cultural events. For example, the year Mercer was born, 1919, was also the year prohibition went into effect in the United States, and the year that the United Artists film group was formed. Another useful feature is a series of sidebars, set off in red lettering, including brief biographical sketches of band members and other personalities, as well as quotes from or about Duke. All Ellington quotations, here and throughout the body of the text, are italicized. There are many illustrations, and a bibliography and discography are included.

Bradbury's *Duke Ellington* could provide a quick refresher course for old-time Ellingtonians, or a concise introduction for newcomers.

Third Splendid Album by Anthony Brown

by Sjef Hoefsmit

After the breathtaking recording of Ellington and Strayhorn's *Far East Suite* by his Asian American Orchestra (DEMS 99/5-20/1) and his second album, *Monks's Moods*, with an orchestra under the same name (01/3-12/3), Anthony Brown has now produced a third one with the Anthony Brown's Orchestra titled *Rhapsodies* (Water Bay Records WBR1010). It completes a trilogy of homages to American composers.

It contains a tribute to Lester Bowie, Bread and Bowie," a new version of George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue," Charles Mingus' "Self Portrait in Three Colors," and Duke Ellington's "TANG" (from the Afro Eurasian Eclipse) and "Come Sunday." It also contains three originals by Anthony and one arrangement by Mark UPU, the bass player in the Orchestra.

You might be confused by the fact that this aggregation no longer is named Asian American Orchestra; it contains, however, a wealth of unusual Oriental instruments like the waterphone; steel drums; Western, Asian, African percussion; Chinese mouth organ; Japanese flute; Cuban box drum; Chinese harp zither and Chinese hammered dulcimer. Do not ask me what they look like. I can, however, assure you that they sound great. In combination with Western instruments like electric guitar, trumpet, fluegelhorn, trombone, tuba, violin, cello, piano, flute and almost every existing reed instrument, the sound of this orchestra is fascinating. When one does recognize the melody, the arrangement can easily be digested.

When the composition is new, one needs to listen more often than only once (as I have up to now). Two of Anthony's own compositions seem too short for my taste. They sound so pretty that I could have enjoyed more of it. One is too long for my taste. I am almost sure that repeated listening will make me change my mind. The melody stayed in my head for quite a while anyhow.

Anthony Brown is a unique new talent. After three albums, one can say that his music stands alone. It is a whole new category. If you have enjoyed one or both of the former albums, you will not be disappointed with this one. Nor will you be disappointed if this album is your first. It will make you try to find the Ellington and Monk albums. The originality of this third album is underlined by an extremely nice package. In the liner notes Anthony's web site address is mentioned: www.anthonymbrown.org. However, I am sure that if you want to ask him for a copy of his latest album he will not mind if you use his e-mail address, which is Antrybrown@aol.com.

Ed. note: This commentary first appeared in DEMS Bulletin 05/3, December 2005-March 2006. We thank Sjef Hoefsmit and DEMS for their kind permission for us to reprint it here.

Short Sheets . . .

Editorial Changes

Rogers Boyes is now editing the Duke Ellington Society, United Kingdom's (DESUK's) *Blue Light*, and Leland Farley is now editing the Southern California Duke Ellington Society's *In a Mellotone*

Hugh Hassan Receives Special Award

The District of Columbia Commission on the Arts and Humanities recognized radio show host and jazz expert Hugh "Rusty" Hasson with a special honor at its annual awards ceremony, at the Kennedy Center in January. About the honor, he asserted that "in truth, the real recognition goes to all the jazz artists who made this music. I'm just sharing it with my students and listeners." Hassan and another honoree, Caribbean music expert Von Martin, were the subjects of a related Washington *Post* feature article in January.

Stokes Tapes at Smithsonian

Tapes of his interviews of jazz musicians, some of which were aired when he hosted regular radio shows, have recently been added to the photographs and other materials in the W. Royal Stokes Collection at the Archives Center of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Scores of his interviews were the basis for books Stokes wrote, including *Living the Jazz Life* and *Growing Up with Jazz*, his most recent.

Stokes is a well regarded chronicler, critic, and proponent of jazz music. In addition to writing books, he has hosted regularly scheduled radio shows, lectured, and contributed to major periodicals in the field.

Scholar Researched Alternate Names of Ellington and Strayhorn Works— and a Copy of His Compilation Is Free!

Sure, we know (or do we?) that "Concerto for Cootie" derived from "Do Nothing 'Till You Hear from Me" and that from one of Cootie's warm-up licks; that "Pretty Girl" became "Star-Crossed Lovers" in the *Shakespeare Suite*, which is also known as *Such Sweet Thunder*; and that "U.M.M.G." is "Upper Manhattan Medical Group."

Well, to inform us about other names, or sub-titles, for hundreds of compositions by Ellington and by Strayhorn, Ellington authority Sven Eriksson has compiled a list of them. His findings complement the "List of Alternative Titles," in Luciano Massagli and Giovanni M. Volonté's monumental *The New Desor* (1999). Eriksson's list is available from him at no cost: Just e-mail a request to s-e-a@cebrevit.nu and one will be sent to you by return e-mail.

Then impress friends by authoritatively declaring that Duke's last theme song was "Manhattan Murals."

TDES to Host One-Day Ellington Conference in March

The Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University's Newark Campus is the site of an Ellington Conference sponsored by TDES from 9:30 am to 4 pm on Saturday, 11 March.

The Society has arranged for bus transportation to the Conference, leaving at 8:30 am from St. Peter's Church in Manhattan. Fare is \$10, and riders are advised to "Get there early—space is limited; first come, first served."

For more information, contact TDES at Box 31 Church Street Station, NYC 10008-0031, or check their internet home page at www.thedukeellingtonsociety.org.

From Our Mailbox . . .

In a seasonal greeting "from cold Stockholm" to all his friends among our members, Göran Wallén tells us that he had Clark Terry in Stockholm for three concerts recently and that he played beautifully. Then in January, Göran sent a "hallo" from "warm" Brasil where he is vacationing.

Incidentally, a founder and chairman of the Duke Ellington Society of Sweden since its inception, Göran Wallén has given up the leadership position. Jan Falk is now chairman of that society.

For Lexiphiles

He tried violin and voice lessons. He did not progress well on violin lessons, being too high strung to bear the constant practice. He often had to break into song because he couldn't find the key.

This was all predicable; indeed, when he enrolled in the conservatory, his classmates soon precluded that he was not noteworthy.

East Coast Jazz Festival (Continued from page 1)

The concerts feature established, well-known artists, for example, ex-Ray Charles saxophone luminary David "Fathead" Newman. Most of the sessions, however, are free and open to the public, among them a Senior Citizen Appreciation Concert, a Big Band Swing Dance, Sunday morning Gospel Matins, workshops, and numerous small group and singles performances, a good number of them by students and youth bands.

Particular values of the Festival are its encouragement of youngsters who perform (and their peers who watch them) and, in turn, their exposure to quality music by their elders. Most important, the whole affair supports the Fish Middleton Jazz Scholarship Fund, whose ultimate beneficiaries are aspiring young musicians.

The back-in-the-day saying applies in this day, "Be There or Be Square."

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

About Our Members

Jack Towers; Don Rouse; Bill Hassan

Among the tapes of interviews by W. Royal Stokes recently acquired by the Archives Center [see page 3] are those of Bill Hassan on 19 February (year not indicated), Don Rouse on 13 February 1984, and Jack Towers on a Stokes broadcast on 7 December 1977.

Ronnie Wells; Brad Bradbie;

Esther Williams; Davey Yarborough

Several of our members will participate in the East Coast Jazz Festival [see page 1]. Among them are Davey Yarborough and his Ellington School of the Arts students; Davey and wife Esther Williams' Washington Jazz Arts Institute Orchestra; and Brad Bradbie, who will conduct a work-shop on "Listening to Jazz."

By all means let us keep in mind that the founder and president of the non-profit Fish Middleton Jazz Scholarship Fund is Ronnie Wells!

Anthony Brown

Anthony Brown and Ken Kimery, executive producer of and drummer in the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra, interviewed jazz legend Chico Hamilton in New York City in January. The interview will be a part of the Smithsonian's Jazz Oral History Program.

Luvenia George

At the 33rd Annual International Association of Jazz Educators Conference in NYC in January, the Smithsonian's James Zimmerman, coordinator, and Luvenia George, co-author, presented a workshop on the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra's newly published *Louis Armstrong Education Kit*.

Ben Pubols

Big Bands is the subject of Ben Pubols OASIS lectures in Portland, Oregon. He goes all the way back to James Reese Europe and Art Hickman and concludes with Claude Thornhill.

John Mason

Returning from a second trip to South Africa to continue research of the interrelationship of the political atmosphere and popular music during the 1950s-70s, John Mason reports that while Johannesburg is more into pop music, Cape Town is alive with jazz.

Patricia Willard

Patricia Willard wrote the 20-page booklet that accompanies the new CD *The Sacred Music of Louie Bellson and The Jazz Ballet*, compositions by Louie Bellson performed by him and various other artists.

Dennett Harrod

The late Dennett Harrod conducted the 1983 interview of Lawrence Brown for the Oral History of American Music project at Yale University.

A Laserdisc Festival of Ellington

Reported by Peter MacHare, subbing for Secretary Gina Rollins

We all owe a great measure of thanks to Ted Shell for his presentation of a wide selection of artists performing the compositions of Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn at our February meeting. Ted brought his own laser disc player from home and a big pile of discs.

Ted first treated us to a concert video by Echoes of Ellington, an ensemble of stars such as trumpeter Randy Brecker, clarinetist Tom Scott, vocalists Dianne Reeves and O.C. Smith, and pianist-arranger Roger Kellaway. After intermission, Joe Pass gave us "Prelude To A Kiss," Ella Fitzgerald sang some Ellington backed by a very young-looking Keter Betts, and then Ben Webster dazzled us on "Perdido."

Ted closed the evening with a concert video of Lena Horne singing with the Count Basie Orchestra under the direction of Frank Wess. Lena was utterly dazzling singing the beautiful Strayhorn composition "Something To Live For." She then began humming "Mood Indigo" in a duet with the bass, and then gave us "Just Squeeze Me" and "Do Nothin' Til You Hear From Me."

Everyone enjoyed Lena so much, that Ted let it play past the Ellington and Strayhorn compositions, late into the night—surely not the first time Lena Horne has kept us up past our bedtimes.

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Send a check payable to The Duke Ellington Society, Inc.
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Calendar-year dues remain a bargain:

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Student, \$5; Brand-New-Member, only \$20!

