

# Ellingtonia

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*The Duke Ellington Society*



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Theodore R. Hudson, Editor

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

## Mark Your Calendar For These February Happenings

### Film of White House Party for Ellington

The National Gallery of Art announces that at 12 noon on 5, 12, 19, and 26 February, a film of the White House celebration of Ellington's 70th birthday will be shown in the East Building Auditorium of the Gallery, Fourth Street and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC. This rare screening of the historic event hosted by Pat and Richard Nixon is part of Black History Month observations.

### Ellington School of the Arts Presents *The Wiz*

This year the young aspiring artists at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts, together with an outside professional creative team, will perform the 1975 Broadway musical *The Wiz* at 7:30 pm on 7, 8, 14, and 15 February; and at 2:30 and 7:30 pm on 9 February. Tickets range from \$15-20. Performances will be at the school's Ellington Theatre, 3500 R St, NW, Washington, DC. For more information, by all means contact the box office at 202-337-4825 or visit the website at [www.ellingtonschool.org](http://www.ellingtonschool.org), where tickets may also be purchased.

A 7:30 show on 13 February will be preceded by a special reception by the Ellington Fund; patrons are encouraged to purchase their tickets now for that event by calling 202.333.2555x101 or by e-mailing [info@ellingtonarts.org](mailto:info@ellingtonarts.org).

## Errata (aka "Clinkers")

In our January issue an aborted syntax change and a plain old-fashioning typo led to an incorrect date for the death of Benny Aasland. The correct date is 27 April 1996 (We thank Sjef Hoefsmit for bringing this error to our attention.) Further, the issue's date on page 4 is incorrect. It should have read January 2008. We shamefacedly apologize for these errata.

(Classified Ad: Wanted, copy editor. Apply immediately.)

## February and March Meetings: Gonsalves Programs by Ted Shell

by Mac Grimmer and Peter MacHare, Program Coordinators

To the casual fan of jazz, Paul Gonsalves is primarily known as "the hero of Newport" for his tremendous solo on "Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue." In our February and March programs, Ted Shell will present Paul Gonsalves in many varied contexts. Here's how Ted describes his program:

"I have for some time had the idea that our beloved saxophonist Paul Gonsalves received too little acclaim and decided to give a program of his recordings. . . . Many of the [selections I will present] were done under his name and . . . other stellar artists'. . . . A few of the albums were not issued in the United States. The leaders are Harry Carney, Earl Hines, Johnny Hodges, Sonny Stitt, and of course, the Duke.

"In my perusals, I found too much good material to be played in one session, so I decided to make it a two-session affair. Many of the selections are of Ducal origin but all are of significant interest to be included in our program. Come hear material you may not have heard before."

Our February program will be held on Groundhog Day, **Saturday, 2 February 2008 at 8 pm** at our usual meeting place, the beautiful **Grace Lutheran Church, 16th and Varnum Streets, NW, Washington, DC.**

## Follow-Up on Terrell Allen Letters

In our last issue, we noted August 1986 as the earliest copy we have of the newsletters written by Terrell Allen during his long service as president of our Society, and asked if anyone knew of or had copies of earlier ones.

We happily thank Don Rouse for producing copies of some dated as far back as 27 January 1969.

## Excerpts from "Clark Terry Speaks, December 23, 2005"

by Göran Wallén

*When our good friend Göran Wallén, a founder and first chairman of the Duke Ellington Society of Sweden, had Clark Terry in Sweden for three concerts several years ago, he recorded a conversation they had. Recently Göran shared a copy of his subsequent transcription of their talk, from which we print below, with his kind permission, slightly edited excerpts.*

**Göran:** . . . Miles Davis has said that you have influenced him in playing?

**Terry:** He always said to me that he liked the way I used to play. He used to phrase some of his entering types into jazz. He used to listen to me because I was a little bit older than him from the same town. I was flattered that he said that in his book. He said, "People complained about the way he was playing and why didn't he change something." He didn't do that because he said, "If Clark and Dizzy is not going to change, I am not going to change." It was flattering to me.

**G:** Another trumpeter was Charlie Spivak. Why did Willie [Cook] listen to him?

**T:** Charlie Spivak had a magnificent pure sound. His theme song was "Star Dream." I think that Willie Cook just liked the pure song.

**G:** Famous trumpet solos

**T:** One famous solo was with trumpeter Maurice "Shorty" McConnell in "Stormy Weather Blues" [by the Earl Hines orchestra]. I have lost my chops. Everybody wanted to play that solo in those days. In the same way everybody wanted to play the solo in "April in Paris" like the trumpeter Thad Jones did in the Count Basie band.

**G:** Talking about the Duke Ellington band. Cat Anderson.

**T:** He was not too well fallowed [sic]. He was raised in J. Giggins office home band [likely the Jenkins Orphanage band] in South Carolina. They used to go around the corner and play for tips. They were dressed all of them in knickers. But Cat had a hole in the pocket so their money fell down in his trouser. He didn't have anything in the pocket, then his friends asked how much he had. He was a kind of kleptomaniac. . . . He was in the band because Duke liked the way he played the high notes.

**G:** Was Cat just a good high note player or a good ensemble player?

**T:** He was a good trumpet player. He could read well and play the high notes.

**G:** What about Rolf Ericson?

**T:** He was a good trumpet player. I liked Rolf very much. Rolf was my good "buddy."

**G:** Cootie and Cat

**T:** The question about the expression "bookends" between Cat Anderson and Cootie Williams started actually as an expression already with Rex Stewart and Cootie in the 30s. Cootie didn't like Rex.

After I left [in] 1959 I didn't play with the Duke Ellington band any more. I played once with Mercer Ellington's band. They didn't know how to play "Harlem Airshaft." I did remember.

**G:** Between Mercer Ellington and Duke Ellington

**T:** I guess it was kind of love and rivalry. Mercer was not so near the music as Duke was. Mercer should play once the French horn with the band in "Pretty and the Wolf." Mercer always played the wrong note. Duke got so disgusted with it, so he just let it give that note in.

**G:** Paul Gonsalves

**T:** Oh, he was the sweetest gentleman in the world. Everybody loved Paul. He was his own worst enemy. He got hooked on the stuff. That carried him away from here. He was beautiful. His mother and Paul used to live in Pawtucket near Cape Verde. . . . She knew that I and Paul were good friends. She used to say, "Where is my boy, Clark Terry?" Every time Paul and I would go along on the road for a long time I wrote a card to her and put Paul's signature on it. That's what she heard from him. Paul couldn't take care of that. Every time he came home to her she looked over his shoulder and looking for me and said, "Where is my boy, Clark Terry?"

She was a beautiful lady.

Paul had two brothers. Johnny and one other brother. He was as dark as his mother.

**T:** Jimmy Hamilton

He was the opposite man to Paul. He was very correct. He was a master on clarinet, very particular. Some people said that Jimmy Hamilton was far better clarinet player than Benny Goodman. He was also very good at tenor saxophone. Very personal. He used to play good tenor in a kind of funky type tenor. We had in the band Paul, who took care of the solos for tenor in the band. Jimmy became more the clarinet player.

## Short Sheets . . .

### ♪ Newly Formed Society Honors Knudsen ♪

Karl Emil Knudsen, who died in 2003, is remembered by Ellington fans as the head of Storyville, the Danish company that produced quality CDs by Ellington and other artists. Friends and associates of his have founded the KEK Society in his honor. For details, go online to [www.karl-emil-knudsen.dk](http://www.karl-emil-knudsen.dk).

### ♪ He Must Have Been an Authentic Prodigy ♪

The Washington *Post* obituary for saxophonist Frank Morgan, who died on 14 December, says that when he was 15 years of age, Duke offered him a job with his band, but that Morgan's father insisted that the boy stay and finish high school.

Incidentally, the photographs of Morgan for his relatively recent CD, *City Nights* (HighNote HCD 7129), were taken by our member John Mason, a history professor at the University of Virginia.

### ♪ New CDs ♪

We haven't heard it, but have read that a CD of a 1950 performance by the Ellington band in Switzerland, *Duke Ellington: Live in Zurich* (TCB 43062) has been released. The same goes for a CD re-issue by Atlantic Masters of the *New Orleans Suite* LP.

## FMJS Society Reorganizing

As we know, the untimely death of our member Ronnie Wells—vocalist, educator, head of the Fish Middleton Jazz Scholarship and co-founder of the East Coast Jazz Festival—meant necessary changes in these cultural enterprises. In this connection, we reprint the following from a recent e-mail to us:

*The Winter Quarterly Concert scheduled for December [was] canceled.*

*Unfortunately, Sabang Indonesian Restaurant has been sold, and it [was] not possible for us to find another venue as this late date. . . .*

*The FMJS Board of Directors is in the process of reorganizing and renaming our 501©, for the purpose of continuing Ronnie's legacy of keeping jazz alive. Information will be forthcoming at a later date. In the meantime, FMJS is no longer accepting memberships. However, contributions to FMJS will be welcome. After the reorganization, funds will be rolled over to the new account.*

*Thank you for your continuing support and love of Jazz!*

### ELLINGTON 2008

For information about venues, programs, participants, schedule, accommodations, registration, and online links, contact the sponsors by postal mail: Ellington 2008, 38 Thurlstone Avenue, London N12 0LP, United Kingdom; by e-mail: [contact@Ellington2008.org](mailto:contact@Ellington2008.org); and online at its website: [www.Ellington2008.org](http://www.Ellington2008.org).

## Appreciation of Billy, Duke, And Ralph Burns as Arrangers

In "Ralph Burns' 'Summer Sequence': An Appreciation" published in *all about Jazz*, Reuben Jackson begins:

"It's no secret that the much heralded (and sometimes over romanticized) Big Band Era produced more than a few notable players and ensemble leaders. But it is also clear that for every, say, Duke Ellington and Claude Thornhill, these bands were also driven by the hard (and often undersung) work of arrangers . . ."

Later, Jackson states that "'Summer Sequence' is, I think, a sublime example of Burns's gifts as an arranger/composer, a tribute to the influence of Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn . . ." Burns, he says, had noted that in addition to Stravinsky, he also loved Duke and Billy.

Jackson's article is an outgrowth of a presentation by him at a colloquium at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in early 2007.

Reuben Jackson the poet has also been busy. He participated at the Black Poets Lean South program in November at Busboys and Poets, a venue in Washington, DC.

## Morton Book on the Way



August 2008 is the announced publication date of John Foss Morton's *Backstory in Blue: Ellington at Newport '56*. For a biographical sketch of Morton, go online to [www.nerf-herders-anonymous.net](http://www.nerf-herders-anonymous.net), a website dedicated to the Star Wars movie series, in which he acted.

## Quotation of the Month

### (Cootie Saves a Life)

Once, while performing at the Rainbow Room in Manhattan, Ellington discovered the band lacked one musician for the union mandate. He immediately told me to borrow one of my father Mercer's trumpets and sit next to Cootie Williams in the trumpet section.

The euphoria of actually being in the Duke Ellington Band was so overwhelming that I began to believe I could actually play. As I raised the trumpet to my lips, Cootie said, "If you play one note, you'll be dead before it's heard."

-- Edward Kennedy Ellington II, "Foreword," in notes for the *Duke Ellington: Live in '58* DVD

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

### Jerry Valburn

The December 2007 *IAJRC Journal* carries an article by Jerry Valburn entitled "The Spotlight Bands Story: Coca-Cola in Swing Music Broadcasting." An accompanying note by Jerry states, "This is a sample of my manuscript which, without pictures, currently runs to over 300 pages" that he plans to submit to a publisher this year. In the article he includes a list of all bands that appeared in the broadcasts, among them Duke, whose entry indicates that he was on the show nine times during 1942-47. Jerry invites additional information for his project; for a wants list, go online to [jvalburn13@netzero.net](mailto:jvalburn13@netzero.net).

### Ben Pubols

Ben Pubols' review of *Willis Conover: Broadcasting Jazz to the World* by Terence M. Ripmaster drew commendations from several of scholarly "regulars" when it was posted online at Duke-LYM last month. This review appeared in our December issue.

### Mark Harvey

The Rev. Mark Harvey's Aardvark Jazz Orchestra's 35th Annual Christmas Concert scheduled for 16 December at Emmanuel Church in Boston was postponed because of adverse weather. The performance was to have included new interpretations of some seasonal favorites as well as a special feature, the premiere of Mark's "Urban Meditations," inspired by a book with the same title.

The orchestra has released its ninth CD, *No Walls: A Christmas Concert* (Aardmuse), described as "an eclectic mix of carols from around the world and the title track 'No Walls,' a tribute to Doctors Without Borders." A concert on 18 April at Stonehill College and the next night at MIT will celebrate the release of the band's tenth CD, *American Agonistes: Music in Time of War* (Leo Records).

Also, look for "Spirit Soundings," an essay by Mark, scheduled for the December issue of *JAZZIZ*.

### Hoefsmit, Hudson, MacHare, Steiner

In the current *DEMS Bulletin* (Dec. 2007-March 2008) Ken Steiner adds to the constantly-in-progress Ellington Itinerary with data about the orchestra at the Casa Mañana in February 1941. Items from *Ellingtonia* are reprinted in the same issue: Ted Hudson's list of nominees for Jazz Journalists Association annual awards who are of some interest to Ellington devotees, and Peter MacHare's splendid review of the revised *Duke's Bones: Ellington's Great Trombonists* by Kurt Dietrich.

Of course, Sjef Hoefsmit edits the publication, freely shares his expertise on Ducal and related matters, and regularly contributes most of the contents of the publication.

## A "Glorious" Party

by Peter MacHare

Our Duke Ellington Society's New Year's party was a glorious synaesthesia of food, drink, music, and people. Our members filled the tables with delightful fares, both savory and sweet, and the Society provided potables. Music was not only by Duke Ellington; we also heard the latest CD by our members Esther Williams and husband Davey Yarborough, *In the Spirit* (ITS001).

Best of all, ladies and gentlemen, if you stick enough people together who enjoy the finer things in life (and what could be finer than the music of Duke Ellington?), a good time is bound to ensue. Aside from the cats and kittens in the Society, we had a number of notable guests. Brad and Yvette Bradby introduced us to two of their friends, Philip Sadler and Juanita Sealy-Williams. We certainly hope to see Phil and Juanita again soon. Ted and Geneva Hudson welcomed the interim minister of Peoples Congregational United Church of Christ, the Rev. Rubin Tendai. Several of our members attend this church. Ted Hudson also introduced John and Gail Morton, whom we also hope to see again soon. John has a book coming out soon called *Backstory in Blue: Ellington at Newport '56*, which can be pre-ordered at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

Geneva Hudson led the group in our annual "Twelve Days of Christmas." Participants received door prizes of CDs, videos, Ellington busts and coffee mugs, these latter two being collectors' items from "Ellington '99."

### To Join or To Renew Membership

*Mail your check payable to*

The Duke Ellington Society, Inc. at  
PO Box 15591, Washington, DC 20003.

*Our dues remain a bargain:*

Member, \$30; Couple, \$50; Student, \$5;

First-time-ever member, just \$20.

Keep in mind that memberships are for the calendar year.

### THE DUKE ELLINGTON SOCIETY, INC.

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