

# Ellingtonia

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## IAJE Announces Bankruptcy

The International Association of Jazz Educators (IAJE) has filed for bankruptcy under Chapter 7 of Federal Bankruptcy Law.

In a statement addressed to the "IAJE Family," its president Chuck Owens lists among the causes: years of primary dependence on its annual conferences for revenue and a "meager response" to a capital campaign intended to ward off pending insolvency. He also mentions its Board having been "blindsided last fall with the discovery of the extent of accumulated association debt."

An article in the *Seattle Times* cited a "perfect storm of bad luck, unchecked growth, fund-raising and management failures" for the association's financial demise.

Throughout its existence, the popular and highly respected organization—comprised of a broad range of educators, students, jazz aficionados, music industry workers, patrons, other interested persons, and the general public—initiated, sponsored, and supported myriad activities, programs, and research.

While it will no longer exist, Owens ends his announcement with a declaration that "the spirit that is IAJE must be rekindled into a new vision for the future."

The future of IAJE's individual chapters and affiliates is uncertain.

## No Kidding

We just read in *IARJC Journal* that a private individual's vast collection of recordings was auctioned off on eBay for \$3,002,150.

## June Program: Duke Ellington and Ella Fitzgerald in France

by Mac Grimmer and Pater MacHare, Program Coordinators

Our last program of the season will feature a very special video performance, *Duke Ellington & Ella Fitzgerald at the Cote d'Azur with Ella Fitzgerald and Joan Miro*, recorded in 1966. As time permits, we will also have selections from new Ellington CDs.

The program will be held on **Saturday, 7 June 2008 at 8 pm** at our usual meeting place, **Grace Lutheran Church, 16th and Varnum Streets, NW** in Washington, DC.

## New Duke Ellington Postage Stamp

by Patricia Willard

Duke Ellington becomes the only person ever to be honored on two United States commemorative postage stamps—with the possible exception of George Washington but the stamps weren't called "commemorative" then. Sometime in July 2008, the Postal Service will offer "Vintage Black Cinema," which will reproduce the famous poster for Ellington's 1929 two-reeler *Black and Tan*, bearing his dramatic, silhouetted image. Also honored in the series are Paul Laurence Dunbar's *The Sport of the Gods*, Josephine Baker's *Princesse Tam-Tam*, Louis Jordan's *Caldonia*, and King Vidor's *Hallelujah*. The 42-cent stamps will be issued in panes of 20, blocks of ten and strips of five. A commemorative folio, cultural diary page and ceremony program will be available on the issue date, to be announced, at an also to-be-announced Newark, NJ location. USPS has not explained the significance of New Jersey in July.



## Interview Excerpts from “Paul Gonsalves Remembered”

by Arthur Luby

We are grateful to Art for adapting the following article from his “Paul Gonsalves Remembered,” which includes an interview of Paul’s sister Mrs. Julia Netto in Rhode Island in early 1975. The essay can be accessed online at [www.paulgonsalves.org](http://www.paulgonsalves.org).

“I really believe he could have done anything he wanted to. He was a great athlete in high school and a wonderful artist. They offered him a scholarship to the Rhode Island School of Design, but he loved the saxophone. . . . When did he take it up? Well, I’m not sure. Actually he started out on guitar. My father taught Paul and my brother Joe how to play and they used to practice around the house. Joe was about five years older than Paul and he had a big head start. But in no time Paul caught up with him and when Joe would get frustrated trying to play something, Paul would just smile and say, ‘Here, Joe, do it this way.’ And then Paul would do it just right. It was so natural for him.

“When he was in high school he got into a group, a trio I think it was, and he played the guitar. After a while, though, he started walking around the house and pantomime playing a saxophone. My father couldn’t figure it out. So finally he asks one of the guys in the trio about what’s going on, and one of them tells him, ‘You know, Mr. Gonsalves, Paul wants a saxophone in the worst way.’ You see, we weren’t well off, and Paul was too embarrassed to come right out and ask for it.

“My father, though, he saved up and one day he came home with a fifty dollar tenor saxophone. It was really a pretty ratty thing, I mean it was only fifty dollars, but Paul used to take it apart and polish it and before long it looked pretty good. I was always afraid he would ruin it by taking it apart like that. But Paul would just look at me and smile and say, ‘Sis, do you think I would take it apart if I didn’t know how to put it back together?’

“After a while Paul scraped up enough money to take clarinet and saxophone lessons from a man up at the Boston Conservatory named Piagetelli. He didn’t look down on jazz and Paul took from him steadily for three years. And he used to come home from his lessons and listen to solos by Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster and before long he could sound exactly like either of them. Anyway, after three years Piagetelli told Paul that he couldn’t teach him anything more and that he could play in any orchestra he wanted, even ones that played classical music. . . .

“You have no idea what it was like for me to see Paul play. I mean, he was always my favorite brother and how many sisters ever got to hear their brother play a number for them with the Duke Ellington Orchestra backing him up. There was one time when my mother and I went and saw Paul when the band was playing at a nightclub in Providence...Smithfield’s or something like that. Paul had left tickets for us, and Duke told the owners to give us dinner on the house. Duke came and sat with us after the first set. . . . He was very witty and was always teasing.

“Anyway, at the start of the next set Duke announced that ‘Paul Gonsalves will now play ‘Happy Reunion.’ And ladies and gentlemen, this is a happy reunion because in the audience tonight are Paul Gonsalves’ mother and his sister Mrs. Julia Netto.’ And Paul played it and it was so pretty, such a happy tune.”

*She paused at the memory and then her voice lowered to almost a whisper.* “I know he did things he shouldn’t have. I’ve heard of those things and I think even my mother knew...but the things he did that were bad...he only hurt himself.”

*And there it was again, the difficult, sinister side of Gonsalves’ life that inevitably pushes forward in any discussion of his work, even among those who loved him. That side became all too clear in the last years of the Ellington Orchestra’s weary journey to the triple wake at Walter B. Cooke, as the physical impact of long term alcohol and heroin abuse showed itself in Gonsalves’ appearance, and as the instances when he was simply incapable of taking or staying in his place on the bandstand piled up. John Updike, in describing the genius of F. Scott Fitzgerald, referred to his talent as “an impulse from above which burned out the wire.” So it was with Gonsalves, but as sympathetic as Mrs. Netto was to her brother’s troubles, the look in her eyes that evening told me something that I came to understand more clearly in the arc of years since—that the impact of self destructive acts always extends beyond the intended target.*

“There’s one more thing I want to show you,” she said while she stepped across her living room and pulled out an album. “This is something Paul did long ago when he was with Phil Edmonds. It’s just one number, they named it ‘Song of Paul.’ It’s authentic Cape Verdean music. . . . They call the style ‘morno.’”

*She put the record on the turntable and a minute later we could hear Gonsalves’ tenor dancing over the melancholy theme stated by the trumpets and then slowing and taking on the familiar fluffy dirty sound with the last few notes almost whispered through the instrument. The music spoke of dispossession and separation and the effort to survive both, and every aspect of Gonsalves’ attack into the melody gave notice of his later approach to the great Ellington/Strayhorn ballads like “Chelsea Bridge” and “Warm Valley.”*

## Mini-Reviews of Two Concerts During Our Hero's Birth Month

### Rollins in a Sentimental (and Other Moods)

At the beginning of Sonny Rollins' section set . . . at the Kennedy Center [on 18 April], he opened with a soaring version of "In a Sentimental Mood." It was captivating. The Washington, DC audience registered its approval loudly as soon as they recognized the melody.

Rollins played the Ellington standard with great passion and color and drive before digressing into a long, extended very impressive and powerful solo that included a second treat for Ellington fans—the Mercer Ellington composition "Things Ain't What They Used To Be." Yes, at the very end of the solo, Rollins threw in a couple bars of that song and the crowd roared even louder. This he got in before finishing "In a Sentimental Mood" as he started it—with passion, drive, and color.

It was one of the best moments of the show and an appropriate tribute to Duke Ellington before a hometown crowd.

— Brian Gilmore

### A Spirited Ellington Band at Blues Alley

It wasn't long into its opening set of a week-end engagement at Washington's Blues Alley in April before the Ellington Orchestra led by trumpeter Barrie Lee Hall, Jr. showed its Ducal credentials and devotion with a surging "Oclupaca." It was followed by a joyful "Jubilee Stomp," with authentic "hot" solo breaks that evoked a sense of what it must have been like to have heard it "back in the day."

And so it went for such tunes as "The Mooche," a showcase for trumpeter Hall with plunger mute; "In a Sentimental Mood," a vehicle for baritone saxist Bob Landham; and "Jack the Bear," which afforded bassist Hassan Abdul-Shakur space for further explorations of the tune.

The full-house audience was also treated to Strayhorn's "Lush Life," "Blood Count," and, of course, "A Train," which closed the set.

Clearly, these seasoned musicians had a feel for what they were re-creating (and in a sense creating, for they "played themselves" rather than attempting to slavishly imitate the original musicians in such pieces as "Jubilee Stomp").

Their leader, Barrie Lee Hall, was the only one in this band who we know played in one led by Duke Ellington himself. We suspect that, happily, it was largely through Hall that these fine musicians so feelingly caught the spirit.

— Ted Hudson

## Coin Honor Is a Possibility

Benjamin Banneker, Frederick Douglass, and Duke Ellington are subject finalists for the design of the District of Columbia's 25-cent coin that the US Mint will issue in 2009.

Under the US Mint 50 States Quarters® Program, every 10 weeks a new state quarter will be released, each in the order that the state was admitted into the Union. The entire program takes ten years to complete. Each selected coin is intentionally unique.

A Washington *Post* writer expressed an opinion that though Banneker, Douglass, and Ellington were admirable achievers, they have "tenuous" connections to DC, Duke's being an "accident of birth that had little meaning in his ultimate accomplishments."

States generally have eschewed their famous sons and daughters in favor of iconic symbols. However, DC's objects such as the Washington Monument and Capitol are recognized more as federal, or national, than as indigenous icons. The slogan "Taxation Without Representation" reportedly has already been rejected for DC's quarter.

The Secretary of the Treasury has to approve the design for each coin—after consulting with the chief executive of the state, DC, or territory and with the Commission of Fine Arts and after considering a review by the Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee.

## JJA Finalists Announced

Go to <http://www.jazzhouse.org/2008finalists.html> to see the Jazz Journalists Association's 2008 Awards list of finalists in each category.

## What If? Department

In its online Jazz News, Jazzinstitut reported that Lee Hildebrand in the San Francisco *Chronicle* stated that when Louie Bellson married Pearl Bailey and left the Ellington Band, the Duke had asked Louis Hayes to join, but he had not felt that playing with a big band would be the best for him at the time.

## CORRECTION

The title of the CD produced by TCB Music SA that appeared in our review of it on page 2 of our May issue is incorrect. It should have been *Duke Ellington and His Orchestra: Live in Zurich, Switzerland [not Sweden]*.

We sincerely apologize for this error.

If your usual retail sources don't have in stock this "artistic delight," as the CD is described in the review, it can be bought online (where some other TCB titles are also listed) at [www.allegro-music.com](http://www.allegro-music.com), web site of TCB's North American distributor, Allegro-Music, Inc, in Portland, OR. It is also listed on popular web sites such as [amazon.com](http://amazon.com), [jr.com](http://jr.com), and [cduniverse.com](http://cduniverse.com)

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

### Bob Reny

Bob Reny's review in our April issue of The Duke Ellington Legacy's recent CD *Thank You Uncle Edward* was reprinted, with added graphics and several minor text changes, in the May 2008 *IAJRC Journal*.

### Elinor F. Eugene

A note from vocalist Carole Sloane thanks us for a copy of our May issue, "which includes the generous review of *Dearest Duke* written by Elinor F. Eugene. Please tell her I appreciate her opinion greatly."

### Esther Williams and Davey Yarborough

Esther Williams and husband Davey Yarborough headlined "A Tribute to Duke Ellington" at Plymouth Congregational Church in Washington, DC on 19 April. The band consisted of a rhythm section and a "front line" of Davey with his reeds and flute and special guest Bobby Felder, who played bass trumpet and his primary instrument, trombone. Their selections included standards such as "Caravan," "Take the 'A' Train," "Perdido." In addition to "Come Sunday," "Don't Get Around Much Any More," and several other Ellington songs, Esther sang non-Ducal "Grandma's Hands" and "For All We Know."

### Lettie Jane Austin-Fenderson

From the obituary for Dr. Lettie Austin who, while not a member of our Society, was a financial contributor to our student outreach initiatives:

*Never at a loss for ideas and the words to express them, this human dynamo, this dazzling thunderbolt, this trailblazer, Lettie Jane Austin could be stopped in her tracks by a beautiful aria, a virtuosos performance of a piano concerto, a Duke Ellington melody, or the intricate harmony of an acapello choir.*

### Quotation of the Month

The classical guys have their scores, whether they have them on stand or have memorized them. But we have to be creating, or trying to, anticipating each other, transmuting our feelings to the music, taking chances every goddamned second.

And that spontaneity was also part of Ellington's orchestra. As Clark Terry explained to me about Duke: "He wants life and music to be always in a state of becoming. He doesn't even like to write definitive endings to a piece. He'd often ask us to come up with ideas for closings, but when he'd settled on one of them, he'd keep fooling with them. He always likes to make the end of a song sound like it's going somewhere."

— Nat Hentoff, "Duke Ellington's Posthumous Revenge," *JazzTimes*, November 2004. (Ed. Note: We thank Bob Reny for sending us this quotation.)

## May Program Review

Reported by Peter MacHare

Our May program was the new DVD *Duke: The Last Jam Session*. This wonderful "new find" contains a video of Duke recording the album *Duke's Big Four* on 8 January 1973. The album was produced by Norman Granz and features Duke on piano with Joe Pass on guitar, Ray Brown on bass, and Louie Bellson at the drums. We see the musicians planning each track, rehearsing, playing the final take, and even listening to the playback.

The DVD contains almost the entire album and, of course, a lot more as well. Duke is lively and engaged, leading the group with a nod here, a lifted finger there. Highlights are "The Brotherhood" from the Third Concert of Sacred Music and "Fragmented Suite for Piano and Bass."

### Should We Change Our Meeting Time?

Several members have suggested that we meet at an earlier time. A brief canvass at our May meeting showed most members liked the idea, but that some did not. What do you think of the idea of moving our meetings (starting in October) to 7 pm? If you have an opinion, send an e-mail to Peter MacHare at [peter@depanorama.net](mailto:peter@depanorama.net) or call him at 301-982-4249.

## Latest on Howard Theatre Project

Howard Theatre Restoration, Inc. has been awarded a \$5,000 grant by the National Trust for Historic Preservation from the Dorothea de Schweinitz Preservation Fund as seed money for the restoration of the Howard.

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To Join or To Renew Membership  
Mail your check payable to  
The Duke Ellington Society, Inc. at  
PO Box 15591, Washington, DC 20003, USA.  
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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