

Ellingtonia

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Lil Greenwood, 1924-2011

"Duke Has Been Waiting for Her"

Former Ellington vocalist Lil Greenwood died on 19 July in her native Alabama. She was in hospice care, having had a stroke last year.

"Duke has been waiting for her," commented Mobile, Alabama area radio host Carmen Brown.

In a 1960 *Ebony* magazine, Duke characterized her voice as "a mixture of Marian Anderson, Ella Fitzgerald, Dinah Washington, and Mahalia Jackson." The daughter of a preacher, she had a strong background in church music and, by the time Duke heard her, the blues. Of him she said, "Duke Ellington taught me jazz."

Ms. Greenwood was with the Ellington orchestra from June 1958 until early December 1960 and on other occasions. A featured song by her with Ellington was "Walkin' and Singin' the Blues." She had composed and used it to open and close her shows at a club in San Francisco where Duke "discovered" her.

The story goes that not long after, he called and invited her to come to New York to a midnight recording session and she accepted. When she arrived at Billy Strayhorn's apartment in the afternoon, it seemed that Billy and Duke had adapted her song, adding lyrics and verses. And, surprise, during the recording session that night she was asked by Duke to sing it. One take, and it was a wrap, leading Duke to nickname her "One Take Lil."

How Long, How Long . . .

Ever wonder how long your recordings will last, or be in good enough shape for serious listening?

MPC World magazine recently published "best guesses that represent personal experience" on media lifespans, noting that the data are of course "subject to debate."

Here are some estimates for two types of storage:

	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Cool, Dark, Dry</u>	<u>Ordinary Storage</u>
Vinyl record	100+ years	100 years	
CD, DVD	75+ years	20 years	
Burned CD/DVD	30+ claimed	5-20 years	
Magnetic tape	50+ years	20 years	

October Program: Ellington by Other Headliners

by Theodore Shell

I had asked our president for permission to present the first program of the season and that the title of the program would be "Ellington's Music Played by Other Musicians." Upon starting the project I found there was a plethora of materials in my collection, enough for several programs on the topic, selections from such artists as Basie, Lunceford, Hampton, Herman, Brubeck, Gillespie, Tatum, Rich, Kirk, Modern Jazz Quartet, "The Lion," Hines, Eldridge, Coltrane, Carter, Getz, et al.

When I started transferring music from LPs, I found there is enough material to allow me to continue the project in later programs, some from unlikely sources such as a Guy Lombardo on an album featuring Johnny Hodges. I recall the chagrin of many clerks when I attempted to find and purchase the album.

I hope the enjoyment will be such as to promote the continuation of the project in future meetings.

The program will take place at our regular time and place, **Saturday, 1 October at 7 pm at Grace Lutheran Church, 4300 16th Street, NW** (at the corner of Varnum Street), **Washington, DC**. See you there!

Terry Autobiography Debuts October 1

Ninety-one years young Clark Terry's autobiography, *Clark: The Autobiography of Clark Terry*, edited by his wife, Gwen Terry (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), is set for release on October 1.

He writes in his blog (clarkterry.com/blog), "Working on autobiography, in a way, was just like practicing my horn, going over and over a passage. Each time Gwen read a chapter to me, I'd analyze and scrutinize it, kick it around, make some changes, you know, trying to make it better. After a while, my publisher said, 'Okay, that's it. No more changes.'"

Quincy Jones wrote the preface for the book, Bill Cosby the foreword, and David Dempsey the introduction. As reported earlier, Gwen Terry was Clark's amanuensis.

State of Art by Ben Williams

Concord Jazz CJA-32341-02

Reviewed by Patricia Braxton

Bassist Ben Williams, our 2002 recipient of the Duke Ellington Society Annual Scholarship Award when he was a student at the Duke Ellington School for the Performing Arts, has just released his first CD, titled *State of Art*.

There are 11 songs on this CD, a fine first effort, four of which are Ben's compositions. It's a good mix of tunes featuring some with a touch of funky, smooth jazz-influenced songs such as on his first cut, "Home," to more mellow tracks such as "Things Don't Exist" and his own "Dawn of a New Day." Track 3 includes a "rap" biography, "The Lee Morgan Story," composed by John Robinson and performed here by him and Christian Scott.

Ben plays a bass solo before the band launches into Michael Jackson's "Little Susie," a beautifully constructed song featuring Jaleen Shaw on soprano saxophone backed by a string quartet.

The last cut ends with the classic "Moonlight in Vermont" but not played in the traditional way, but rather stretched into a broader, more expansive sound with the melody softly blending inside the song. Ben's version of Steve Wonder's "Part-Time Lover" is similarly expanded.

The CD features an excellent group of musicians, including Marcus Strickland on tenor and soprano saxophone, Matthew Stevens on guitar, Gerald Clayton on piano and Fender Rhodes, Jamire Williams on drums, and Etienne Charles on percussion.

Ben Williams' first CD effort has the mature, handsome sound of a well-trained musician. I recommend we all purchase a copy.

Preparations for 2012 Conference in England

The following information about plans for the 21st International Duke Ellington Study Group Conference was gleaned from the posting on the official website at www.ellington2012.org as we prepared this issue of *Ellingtonia*. For more detailed information, keep up with the official website. Also, make use of the contacts, below.

Host The Conference is being coordinated by a team headed by the organizer of Ellington 2008, and is recognized by the Duke Ellington Society, United Kingdom.

Dates The Conference will open on Wednesday evening, 23 May and close on Sunday, 27 May 2012.

Place Conference events will take place in Woking, England, located "about 28 minutes or less by an extremely frequent train service to the center of London." There is a half-hourly direct coach to Woking from Heathrow Airport and hourly trains there from Gatwick Airport via Guildford.

Schedule Wednesday, 23 May: pre-Study Group get-together; welcome reception; The Ellington Age (six mini-sessions) † Thursday, 24 May: morning and afternoon presentations; evening civic reception and concert † Friday, 25 May: morning and afternoon presentations; evening concert † Saturday, 26 May: morning and afternoon presentations; evening concert † Sunday, 27 May: morning DESUK AGM; jazz brunch; afternoon presentation; evening banquet and concert

Accommodations There are a Holiday Inn and the Woking Hotel in the immediate area of Conference activities. Others are "further afield and within reasonable reach."

Venues The HG Wells conference center will be a base for daytime and evening events. Use is also being planned for The Lightbox.

Call for Papers Planners are seeking offers for lectures, talks, reminiscences, interviews, and panel discussions for daytime programs. Proposals should be received by the end of October. The Study Group itself will run from 24-27 May. While proposals on any "Ellingtonian" subject will be entertained, the theme for the Conference is "Ellington in the 21st Century."

Registration There are several classes of registration: Founder Registration is available until the end of September and will help greatly with planning; Full Registration; Full Registration with Banquet, and, for delegate's partner or friends, Banquet Only Registration. Payment may be made in several ways—mailed check, money order, bank transfer.

Donations Donations will be appreciated, whether the donor attends or not.

Contact Information Postal address: Ellington 2012, 2 Julian Close, Woking, GU21 3HD, UK † E-Mail address: E12@Ellington2012.org † Website: <http://www.ellington2012.org>

Ellington Reissue, Steven Lasker Are Winners

Mosaic's *Complete 1932-1940 Brunswick, Columbia, and Master Recordings of Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra* won the 2011 Jazz Journalists Association's award for best Historical Recording, Boxed Set or Single CD Reissue of the Year.

But that's not all: Steven Lasker won the Association's award for Best Liner Notes of the Year, for that same reissue!

Washington Jazz Arts Institute Showcases the "Stars of Tomorrow"

by Bill Hasson

The Washington Jazz Arts Institute's Summer Concert in August at Peoples Congregational United Church of Christ renewed one's faith in the talent of young people. Not only was there a great selection of musical and vocal genres, but the artists gave both skillful and creative interpretations.

Many of the tunes have become standard repertoire for more seasoned ensembles, and these young artists approached them with both humility and grace. There was a transgenerational appreciation of the tunes of various composers and vocalists for these talented young artists to interpret, hone their skills, and woo the audience at the same time.

Be on the lookout for their next performances, in that you are looking at the stars of tomorrow.

Ed. Note: Davey Yarborough and wife Esther Williams are the founders of the Institute. An interesting feature of its methods is a peer system whereby older or more advanced students mentor the younger or less advanced ones.

Asian American Jazz Movement Celebrated by AAO and Fifth Stream Music

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Asian American Jazz movement, of which our member Anthony Brown's Asian American Orchestra (AAO) is the "flagship ensemble."

An internet posting states that the AAO and its affiliate Fifth Stream Music seek to use "the power of music to transform lives and celebrate American cultural diversity through the art form of jazz."

Part of Fifth Stream's mission is to "provide transformative educational experiences for young people by using the creative process of jazz to develop, express and value their individual voices." In this connection, last year the organization premiered at an Oakland, California community center a moratorium that seeks to curb youth waywardness.

John Coleman Passes

Born in Knoxville, TN in 1919, our member John Oldham Coleman, Sr. died in Washington, DC on 31 July.

Described in one funeral testimony as a "consummate intellectual," he was a professional statistician, earning honors and awards while in the federal service and for civic and fraternal activities. When he retired he was Chief of the Statistical Methods Division of the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

John Coleman was a lover of and from time to time lectured on jazz and related musics. His funeral program states that "During his last days, jazz music continued to put a smile on his face."

His funeral service reflected this love: For the prelude our member Davey Yarborough played "On the Sunny Side of the Street," and the postlude was Irving Berlin's "Blue Skies." Esther Williams, another of our members, sang "It Is Well with My Soul" as the opening hymn and "I Believe" as the hymn of thanksgiving.

We extend to John Coleman's family and other loved ones our deep condolences.

Jazzinstitut Starts Jazz:Kritik Project, Welcomes Review Books

In its *Jazz News*, the Jazzinstitut Darmstadt invites those interested in writing about jazz to become involved in an initiative by which they submit criticism of selected videos. This project "is directed towards journalists writing for daily newspapers or online media and is organized as an online workshop. . ."

In the same issue of their publication, the organization states that it probably holds Europe's "best-sorted library on jazz," from earliest to recent books. It further invites copies of books to be reviewed. They will be reviewed in German, but the institute offers the caveat "just don't hold us accountable for any jumble-up such online-translators like to produce."

For details about both these activities, get in touch with Jazzinstitut Darmstadt at jazz@jazzinstitut.de.

Duke Honored by Engineers

Under of a photo of him in the *Cleveland Call Post* of 27 January 1934 is the news that:

The Society of Engineers has just voted Duke Ellington an honorary membership for his latest Victor recording "Daybreak Express."

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

Charles Stewart

Having served with distinction for twelve years as president and three as vice president, Charles Stewart decided not to let his name be placed in nomination for re-election as president of the Southern California Duke Ellington Society in its recent election of officers.

Patricia Braxton

The cover/lead article of the bi-monthly *AAHGS News* was written by Pat Braxton. Her genealogy research, as reported in our April 2011 issue, uncovered the mystery of the whereabouts of former Ellington vocalist June Norton, who seemed to have disappeared from the Washington music community. Through genealogical sleuthing, Pat discovered that June had died in 2004, unrecognized by area music enthusiasts since the name in media reports of her death was June Cuff, her married name. Professionally she had always used her maiden surname, Norton.

Ken Steiner

In the current issue of *DEMS Bulletin* we read that a "special compliment" should go to Ken Steiner for the liner notes of *DETS Volume 15 of the Duke Ellington Treasury Shows*, recently released by Storyville. The item continues to say that his notes are "informative, very agreeable to read and impeccably documented."

Mark Harvey

New Englanders especially, take note. This fall, the Boston-based Aardvark Jazz Orchestra led by the Rev. Mark Harvey will be playing most of its concerts on the road.

A concert at Colby College in Maine on 14 October will include the premiere of band member guitarist Richard Nelson's folk song-based "Deep River." On 11 November the band will be at St. Peter's Church in New York City for a special concert celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Society for the Arts, Religion and Contemporary Culture. Two days later they will be at Christ and Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Westport, CT with an all-Ellington program.

Back home in Boston the Aardvark Orchestra will play a concert on 8 October at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and then their 39th Annual Christmas Concert at Emmanuel Church on 10 December.

For a short documentary on Mark's *Sumner* in honor of his ancestor Charles Sumner, an abolitionist, statesman and senator from Massachusetts, go to the Aardvark website or to YouTube.

June Meeting a Fascinating Member's Choice Evening

At the last meeting of our program year, our members were treated to familiar and unfamiliar music of Billy Strayhorn and Duke Ellington. There were the always welcome classics such as variations of "Sophisticated Lady" and "Take the 'A' Train" of course, but as well some seldom (for some listeners, never before) heard choices.

A few examples: New member Barbara Anderson brought to the meeting a rare, originally recorded "Braggin' in Brass" that she had chanced upon at a flea market. Bill McFadden, on the other hand, played and briefly introduced an excerpt from the *Goutelas Suite*.

Louvenia George distributed a transcript of a presentation by Jack Towers before a group of educators involved in the Duke Ellington Youth Project from "back in the day" when she was the director of that initiative.

Ted Shell offered two Ellington compositions played by the Jimmie Lunceford orchestra. Patricia Willard shared an excerpt from "Jazz Casual Number One," a first-ever but never released audio project by Ralph Gleason.

All in all, it was an unusually engaging evening.

Attention Members

Please check your membership expiration date on the upper right of your address label. Remember, our membership is by the calendar year. Thank you.

To Join or To Renew Membership

Send your check payable to

The Duke Ellington Society, Inc.

PO Box 15591, Washington, DC 20003, USA

Our dues remain a bargain:

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First-time-ever member, just \$20

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