

# Ellingtonia

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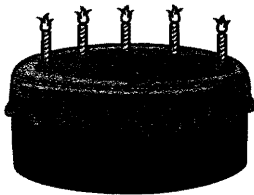
Theodore R. Hudson, Editor

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

29 November

In Grateful And Loving Memory Of



**BILLY  
STRAYHORN**

On His Birthday

\* \* \* \* \*

*Poor little Swee' Pea, Billy Strayhorn, William Thomas Strayhorn, the biggest human being who ever lived, a man with the greatest courage, the most majestic artistic nature, a highly skilled musician whose impeccable taste commanded the respect of all musicians and admiration of all listeners. . . .*

*He demanded freedom of expression and lived in what we consider the most important and moral of freedoms: freedom from hate, unconditionally; freedom from self-pity (even throughout all the pain and bad news); freedom from fear of possibly doing something that might help another more than it might himself; and freedom from the kind of pride that could make a man feel he was better than his brother or neighbor.*

*His patience was incomparable and unlimited. He had no aspirations to enter in any kind of competition, yet the legacy he leaves, his oeuvre, will never be less than the ultimate on the highest plateau of culture (whether by comparison or not).*

*God bless Billy Strayhorn.*

— Duke Ellington, from Eulogy,  
as printed in *Music Is My Mistress*

\* \* \* \* \*

Billy Strayhorn's Motto  
**Ever Up and Onward**

## November Member's Choice: Billy Strayhorn!

by Peter MacHare

Our November program will be a member's choice featuring the compositions of Billy Strayhorn.

Bring any recording of a Billy Strayhorn composition. The artist can be anyone you like, in or out of the Ellington fold. We expect to have a grand time enjoying and learning about the music of Strayhorn, so you definitely want to participate in this member's choice. Bring more than one recording and we will play seconds after everyone has played one.

The program will be on **Saturday, 5 November at 7:00 pm** at our usual hangout, **Grace Lutheran Church, 16th and Varnum Streets, NW** in beautiful **Washington, DC**. That will be the same night we set our clocks back, so we all can get an extra hour of sleep after our Strayhorn party.

### Annual Election of Officers and Board Members

We are due to elect officers and board members at our December meeting. If you presently serve and do not wish to be nominated for another year, please get in touch with Peter MacHare at [peter@depanorama.net](mailto:peter@depanorama.net). If you would like to serve as an officer or board member, please get in touch with Peter as well.

## ELLINGTON 2012

**23-27 May 2012 - Woking, England**

Opening Reception - Four Days of Papers and Panel

Discussions - Wednesday Evening Reception

Evening Concerts - Sunday Closing Banquet - And More

The last day to register as a Founding Delegate is October 15. A "beneficial" registration rate for the Conference continues until the end of November.

For registration, call for papers, daily schedules, programs, special attractions, lodging, and other pertinent information about the Conference, go online to [www.Ellington2012.org](http://www.Ellington2012.org)

## Experiencing Strayhorn Sources of Information and Pleasure

by Theodore (Ted) Hudson

### Books

Two books about Billy Strayhorn, each the only of its kind, are easily available from major bookstores and online. *Lush Life* by David Hajdu (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1996) is a biography. In addition to text, it contains photographs, bibliography, and discography. As the title states, *Something to Live for: The Music of Billy Strayhorn* by Walter van de Leur focuses on him as a composer. While some of the body is necessarily concerned with technical matters, the text is highly readable. A four-part Appendix consists of “Scores of Scores,” i.e. a list of Strayhorn manuscripts in the Ellington Collection at the Smithsonian Institution; “Works on Record,” i.e. those known to have been recorded during his life; “Works on Record Posthumously Premiered”; and “Billy Strayhorn’s Compositions,” i.e. his known compositions as well as those attributed to him, whether recorded or not. Much had been written about Strayhorn by the time these books were published, and the bibliographic information in both books is invaluable in this regard.

### Internet

The obvious starter on the Web site **Strayhorn Songs, Inc.** at [billystrayhorn.com](http://billystrayhorn.com), with its groupings: biography, timeline, photos, books, quotes, discography, about BSS [Billy Strayhorn Songs], and an online store that is “temporarily suspended.” Worth mentioning is that there is now a Strayhorn page on Facebook that currently features a rare, historic photo of him by the famous Harlem Renaissance-era writer and photographer Carl van Vechten. There are, of course, other sites where Strayhorn is discussed or mentioned in some meaningful way, for example Wikipedia, that are accessible by search tools such as Google and Bing.

*Ed. Note: A copy of the Van Vechten photo, now is the public domain, may be obtained from the Library of Congress*

### DVD

*Billy Strayhorn: Lush Life* (Independent Lens), featured on a PBS telecast several years ago, won an Emmy Award and a George Foster Peabody Award in 2008. Independent Lens advises those who would like to obtain a copy to contact [lushlifedvd@mac.com](mailto:lushlifedvd@mac.com).

### CDs

There are some (well, not many enough) recordings of Strayhorn’s compositions regularly stocked by major or specialty stores, but more are offered by online vendors. Here is a selected sampling of variously available CDs.

We begin by mentioning three by Billy alone or as leader: *The Peaceful Side of Billy Strayhorn* by him (United Artists); *Piano Passion* (Storyville), solo piano by him; and *Caravan: With the Duke Ellington All-Stars, the Billy Strayhorn All-Stars, and the Johnny Hodges All-Stars* (Fantasy).

Several are by others performing only Strayhorn music: *Lush Life* by Joe Henderson (Polygram Records), *Lush Life: The Billy Strayhorn Songbook* (Verve), *Marian McPartland Plays the Music of Billy Strayhorn* (Concord Records), *A Proper Introduction to Billy Strayhorn: Passion Flower* (Proper Records), and *This Side of Strayhorn*, by Terell Stafford (Maxjazz Records). The last is relatively new, and we plan to have a review of it in our next issue.

Then there are those that contain music by Strayhorn and others: *...And His Mother Called Him Bill* by Duke Ellington, with that superb piano rendition of “Lotus Blossom” by Duke (Bluebird), *Johnny Hodges with Billy Strayhorn and The Orchestra* [“The” is emphasized in the original] (Verve), *Stanley Dance Sessions: Billy Strayhorn and Johnny Hodges* (Lone Hill Jazz), and *We’ll Be Together Again* by Lena Horne (Blue Note Records). Several songs on this last CD he wrote especially for Ms. Horne.

Finally, there are two that deserve a special note: *Portrait of a Silk Thread: Newly Discovered Works of Billy Strayhorn* by the Dutch Jazz Orchestra led by Jerry van Rooijen (Kokopelli Records) and *This Is Love: More Newly Discovered Works of Billy Strayhorn* (Challenge) by the same orchestra. These contain some rarely or never before publicly heard compositions uncovered by Walter van de Leur, author of the book cited above. He prepared scores for their performance, was involved in the production of the CD, and wrote the liner notes.

### ORAL HISTORIES

Of the 32 interviews in the Ellington Project of the Oral History of American Music (OHAM) collection at the Yale University Library, 5 of them are about Strayhorn. The interviewees are Robert Conaway, Lillian Dicks, Carl McFicker, Gregory Morris, and Carol and Helen Strayhorn. Transcripts of interviews can be read in OHAM’s offices by appointment; if permissions allow, transcripts may be purchased by mail. Tables of contents of transcripts may be requested, free of charge. Contact information: OHAM, Yale University, PO Box 208307, New Haven, CT 06520-8307; and phone, 203-432-1810.

## Short Sheets . . .

### ♪ Morrison Relief Fund ♪

A Relief Fund in her name is accepting donations for Barbara Morris, a member of the Southern California DES and a singer who, as one member says, "promotes Duke in her programs." She has had surgery and reportedly needs help "through this tough transition," hence the Fund, which can be accessed at [jazz@streamersjazz.com](mailto:jazz@streamersjazz.com) online.

### ♪ TJD Has Online Version ♪

The Jazz Discography (TJD) is now available online. According to a current announcement, searches and sorts on TJD CD-ROMs as well as new features are available through this new medium. For full details, go to [www.lorisco.com](http://www.lorisco.com).

### ♪ Phil Schaap Materials For Sale ♪

Phil Schaap, well known jazz researcher-scholar, radio producer, and teacher is offering radio broadcasts, "knowledge," publications, recordings, and other items for sale at Phil Schaap Jazz, on the Web site [philschaapjazz.com](http://philschaapjazz.com). Likely of particular interest to collectors of Ellington ephemera is a copy of the 18 September 1985 funeral program for Cootie Williams, priced at \$30.

### ♪ Discord in Fargo ♪

From the Jazzinstitut's *Darmstadt Jazz News* we quote: "The editors of Inforum, a news website in Fargo, North Dakota, take a gloomy view of jazz today caused by the decision of Simon Rowe to leave his post as a Minnesota State University Moorhead music instructor to take a job in California as a curator at the Dave Brubeck Institute. . . . They remind their readers of Fargo's claim to jazz fame, a live recording by Duke Ellington and his orchestra in 1940 from Fargo's Crystal Ballroom. Now that Rowe is leaving, a jazz initiative responsible for regular jazz disbanded, and the editors complain that 'jazz, an old art well past the zeitgeist of today, doesn't have gusto to survive on its own. It needs people pushing it forward to survive.'"

## Quotation of the Month

*In music, as you develop a theme or musical idea, there are many points at which direction must be decided, and any time I was in the throes of debate with myself, harmonically or melodically, I would turn to Billy Strayhorn. We would talk, and then the whole world would come into focus. The steady hand of his good judgment pointed to the clear way that was most fitting for us. He was not, as he was often referred to by many, my alter ego. Billy Strayhorn was my right arm, my left arm, all the eyes in the back of my head, my brainwaves in his head, and his in mine.*

— Duke Ellington, *Music Is My Mistress*

## Lewis Giles, Jr., 1925-2011

Louis Giles, Jr., a member of our Society and authoritative devotee of jazz, died at his home in Columbia, MD on 28 September, following an extended illness.

At his funeral services on 7 October at the Kaufman Funeral Home in Eldridge, MD, several tributes mentioned his love for America's "classic music" as well as for other types. In this respect it is worth noting that the program included not only traditional hymns but closed with a secular classic, "Here's to Life," sung meaningfully by a family friend.

He was a board member of the Baltimore-Washington Jazz Society, and had been instrumental in the presentation of jazz events by leading artists at the Merriweather Post Pavilion, a prominent East Coast venue.

Louis Giles had an admirable collection of recordings and related ephemera and patronized festivals and other jazz happenings. Another passion of his was travel, so he and his wife, Minerva, enjoyed jazz cruises.

A native Washingtonian, Lewis Giles grew up in a house designed by his father, and became, as was his father, a prominent and highly regarded architect. He had a distinguished career in the federal government, having risen to the position of chief architect of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command.

He was also well known for his achievements in private practice. Among his projects were construction drawings for several Howard University buildings and designs for houses and other types of structures, including designs for Beulah Baptist Church and Purity Baptist Church in Washington.

As the funeral program noted, "Lewis thoroughly enjoyed his role as the patriarch of an expanded family." He is survived by his wife Minerva, son Alan, and daughters Kay and Julie, grandchildren, and many devoted friends. We extend to his family and other loved ones our sincere sympathy.

## Match the Titles of Strayhorn Compositions

In the Ducal world, it was not unusual for song titles to have other names. The following tunes composed by Billy Strayhorn are among those with alternate titles. How many can you match before looking at the answers, below?

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Absinthe ____                 | A. Charlotte Russe                          |
| 2. Bluebird of Delphi ____       | B. Elf                                      |
| 3. Charpoy ____                  | C. Lana Turner / Francesca                  |
| 4. Chelsea Bridge ____           | D. Manhattan Murals                         |
| 5. Dance of the Floreadores ____ | E. Mynah                                    |
| 6. Isfahan ____                  | F. No alternate                             |
| 7. Johnny Come Lately ____       | G. Stomp / Little Light Psalm               |
| 8. Lotus Blossom ____            | H. Ricard / Water Lily                      |
| 9. Multicolored Blue ____        | I. Violet Blue                              |
| 10. Take the 'A' Train ____      | J. Waltz of the Flowers / Waltz-Trot-Flours |

Answers: 1H, 2E, 3C, 4F, 5J, 6B, 7G, 8A, 9I, 10D

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

**Bill McFadden**

Aha! Bill must have said when he noticed that the photo of Duke at the piano on the CD cover of *Retrospection: The Piano Sessions* by Lone Hill Jazz is the reverse of the previously published one in the book that came with *The Complete Capitol Recordings of Duke Ellington* CD set.

**Davey Yarborough and Esther Williams**

Vocalist Esther Williams and Davey Yarborough recently opened the Fall Jazz Series at Montpelier Arts Center in Laurel, MD. They were also featured in the popular Jazz Night series at Westminster Church in Washington, DC.

**Ted Hudson**

On display at an art exhibit during the summer at the Town Hall of historic Highland Beach, MD, was a Ted Hudson photograph of a flower titled "Synaesthesia: Billy Strayhorn's 'A Flower Is a Lovesome Thing.'" The flower's color: a gentle magenta modulating to a blushing pink. Hmmm—may we look forward to a photographic rendition of "The Single Petal of a Rose"?

**Anthony Brown**

Anthony Brown and his Asian American Orchestra have been invited to perform their "India and Africa: A Tribute to John Coltrane" program for the Aperitivo in Concerto series in Milan, Italy in March of next year.

**Bee Pine and Jim Fogle Will Be Missed**

Jim Fogle, a key member of the organizing committee for "Ellington '90" in Ottawa, died unexpectedly in August. He attended a number of the international Ellington conferences from the late 1980s until early 2000. At that 1990 Conference, he spoke on "The Duke in Our Nation's Capital" [Ottawa]. In its announcement of his passing, the *Ottawa Citizen* stated that Jim was an "Ellington record collector, amateur pianist and big band and Dixieland jazz fan: and a supporter of the Ottawa International Jazz Festival."

Another "regular" at the annual conferences, especially at the earlier ones, and active on Duke LYM, was Beatrice (Bee) Pine, who passed away in late September. She was 96. Bill Saxonis, who hosts a highly regarded annual Ellington birthday radio broadcast, met her at the 1990 Conference and kept in touch with her over the years. He remembers Bee as "one of the people that made me feel so welcome in the Ellington community."

Indeed, the international community of Ellington enthusiasts will miss both Bee and Jim.

**Ellington by Others at June Meeting**  
 by Art Luby, Secretary

A presentation by Ted Shell is always a good way to start the Society's season and Ted did not disappoint at our October 1 meeting.

While the title of his presentation was "Ellington Played by Other Artists," to be totally accurate Ted might have added, "with some help from Duke's men." Hence, Coleman Hawkins was joined by Johnny Hodges in a broad-toned hard swinging "Perdido," Wild Bill Davis (whom I think of as an Ellingtonian) delivered high voltage performances of "Don't Get Around Much Anymore" and "Caravan," and Gerry Mulligan received substantial melodic assistance from Ben Webster in finding his way through "Chelsea Bridge."

Count Basie always enjoyed playing Duke's music, and his band delivered a powerhouse version of "In a Mellotone" during its tour of Japan, a number that played to the strength of that great orchestra. We also heard a nice Basie version of "Mood Indigo," but the nuances of that great song are really the province of Duke's orchestra.

The evening was concluded with a truly wonderful version of "Prelude to a Kiss" by Sir Roland Hanna and Davey Yarborough. Both delivered memorable subtle solos, and Hanna's piano work was a tribute to Duke that also reflected his own creative power and thematic control.

**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*

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*Our dues remain a bargain:*

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First-time-ever member, just \$20

**THE DUKE ELLINGTON SOCIETY, INC.**

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Theodore A. Shell