

Ordföranden har ordet:

Hej alla Ellingtonvänner!

Nu är våren här igen, vad skönt, och åter är det en konferens på gång till midsommar. Ack ja vad tiden går fort. Jag fattar inte att det är två år sedan vi var i gång.



Foto Ted Hudson

Tyvärr nås jag i skrivande stund av den tråkiga nyheten att vår egen Duke Ellington-guru och stora diskograf Benny Åslund har avlidit. Se separat nekrolog. Det var ett sorgens bud för alla DEMS-medlemmar och Duke Ellingtonbeundrare, dock har vi vetat en längre tid att Benny var sjuk, men ändå kom slutet plötsligt för oss alla. Benny Åslund har betytt oerhört mycket för alla Duke Ellingtonbeundrare inte minst i Sverige. Jag vet inte hur Ellingtonintresset hade sett ut i dag i Sverige utan Benny's arbete. Han var grundstenen för oss att bygga på när vi planerade för Ellington '94. Vi vet också att Ellington '94 stöddes till 100% av Benny, och att det var många delegater som såg fram emot att få träffa Benny i Stockholm. Benny's begravning skedde den 23 maj i Järfälla kyrka utanför Stockholm. Benny's närmaste svenska vänner inom Ellingtonsfären deltog vid begravningen och vännen Sjef Hoefsmid kom resande från Belgien.

Vad som nu händer med DEMS vet jag inte just nu. Det får bli en senare fråga inom familjen Åslund, dvs vi får vänta och se.

För övrigt har den gångna tiden bl.a. innehållit två kyrkokonserter. Den ena hade vår medlem Cecilia Öhrwall med sin kör och musiker i Kungsholmens kyrka och den andra var i Sofia Kyrka med Kulturama elevkör. Det är intressant att notera att Ellington's kyrkomusik växer sig så stark inom kyrkans väggar i Sverige. Det har ju tidigare producerats flera kyrkokonserter av andra personer t.ex. Arne Gustavsson från Grums. Jag tror att alltihop hänger samman med att Alice Babs och hennes arbete med Duke Ellington i Sverige. I USA är Duke Ellington's kyrkomusik inte lika känd som här har jag förstått.

Ellington '96 i Toronto är nu på gång och det finns alltid möjlighet att komma med för den som inte har anmält sig. Konferens nr 14 blir intressant hoppas vi, bl.a. kommer Stanley Dance med hustru Helen att medverka. Mycket intressant och kul att få träffa dess legender som lyssnade till Duke redan 1933 i London, dock ej tillsammans, de träffades i USA en tid senare. Nu meddelas också att sångerskan från 1950, Yvonne Lanauze, kommer till Toronto. Spännande.

Vi är nu ett 10-tal svenskar som reser till Toronto i juni. Vi får hoppas att staden är lika vacker som det sägs och att arrangemangen blir lika trevliga som vanligt och inte minst att alla gamla vänner kan träffas igen och berätta vad som hänt sen sist.

I denna Bulletin inför vi nu för första gången två betalda annonser för att bättra på ekonomin. Vet Du om andra som vill annonsera så kontakta oss.

Obs. nästa möte är den 9 september. Till dess ha en skön sommar med mycket musik.

We love you madly,
Göran Wallén

The Duke Ellington Society of Sweden

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BENNY ÅSLUND HAR AVLIDIT

Benny Åslund, som var känd världen över som den mest insiktsfulle kännaren av Duke Ellingtons musik har avlidit i en ålder av 75 år. Han sörjs närmast av hustrun Birgit, sonen Bo samt barnbarn. Benny sörjs dessutom av alla Duke Ellington-beundrare världen över för vilka han var ett kunskapsorakel med en otrolig kompetens på området.

Benny började sin bana inom musiken mycket tidigt. Redan i augustinumret av Estrad 1939 finns en artikel om "Benny's Tiger Boys". Benny var 19 år gammal och äldst i orkestern. Orkestern bestod av Benny piano gitarr, Dag Sandström tr, Bengt Weibull tenor, Bengt Widner cl, Bengt Elmberg tp, Ulf Sandström tp, Gunnar Eriksson gitarr och vokalist var Alice "Babs" Nilsson. Orkestern spelade till skoldanser och Alice var med så ofta som hon hade tid. Redan då var Alice på väg mot sin kommande berömmelse. Signaturmelodien hette "Benny Goes To Town" och var skriven av Benny. Benny hette på den tiden Ungewitter men när hans mamma, som var omgift, avled 1942 återtog Benny namnet från sin mor.

Arbetskarriären blev emellertid inte inom musiken utan Benny började arbeta inom försvaret. Bl.a. var Benny i Oslo några dagar efter 2:a världskrigets slut i maj månad 1945 och besökte fängelset och cellen som hyste en herre vid namn Quisling, som satt där och begrundade sitt öde.

Benny själv tyckte med ett skratt att han var en tidig James Bond. Benny arbetade under många år inom försvaret. Sedan blev det bl.a. Alfa Laval i Tumba och sista åren på Siemens. Yrkesmässigt var det inom dataområdet som Benny arbetade de sista åren. Genom sitt datakunnande kunde Benny sedan under årens lopp på ett enkelt sätt katalogisera och strukturera informationen om Duke Ellington.

Under hela sitt liv var musiken en hobby, som bara växte. Redan från början fanns Duke Ellington med i bilden och Benny började tidigt att samla och katalogisera material, som gällde Duke Ellington. 1954 publicerade Benny "The Wax Works of Duke Ellington". Den innehåller data om inspelningar från tiden 1923 fram till 1954. Det var en bedrift att samla så mycket information om Duke Ellington och hans inspelningar på den tiden. Diskografin var utvecklad med data på ett fulländat sätt, som ingen gjort före Benny. Inte ens amerikanerna hade kommit så långt. Genom sin noggrannhet och ordningssinne fortsatte sedan Benny sitt forskarbete kring Duke's musik.

Benny var under några år medarbetare i Orkesterjournalen och skrev bl.a. där i december 1956 om "Duke och Piraterna" dvs piratutgivningarna. 1958 träffades Benny och Duke och då fick Benny visa upp sin diskografi. Duke blev imponerad. Detta betydde oerhört mycket för Benny och han fick följa med i turnébussen både i USA och i Sverige under 60-talet och kunde därigenom bli bekant med orkestermedlemmarna och övriga medlemmar i Ellingtonfamiljen.

Med tiden fick Benny mycket privata inspelningar och outgivet material från alla möjliga hörn i världen, som gjorde honom till en central punkt, även för amerikanerna, i att katalogisera och forska kring Duke Ellington's musik. Vid en träff berättade Benny att han hade blivit någon slags måttstock, som fick avgöra när andra inte var överens om vad som var rätt information.

På 60-talet träffades en grupp av Benny's vänner bl.a. Sture Hellström, Leif Jönsson, Lennart Landström, Bertil Lyttkens



Foto Olle Lindholm

och Bo Scherman i en studiecirkel i ämnet Duke Ellington. 1979 startades Duke Ellington Music Society, kallad DEMS, av Benny. Det blev en plattform för diskussioner, kommentarer, frågespalt, information och allt som rörde Duke Ellington. Antalet medlemmar blev över 300 från hela världen och hustrun Birgit och sonen Bo fick nu rycka in för att hjälpa till med administrationen.

Åren 1978 och 1979 publicerade Benny nya "The Wax Works of Duke Ellington" i två delar. Del 1 omfattar tiden 6 mars 1940 till 30 juli 1942 och del 2 tiden 31 juli 1942 till 1 november 1944. Dessa publikationer gäller fortfarande i dag som den bästa informationen från dessa år. I oktober 1982 besökte Benny den första Ellingtonkonferensen i Jerry Valburns hem utanför New York. Detta blev sedan en årlig tradition och när vi i Sverige planerade för Ellington '94 var Benny en centralfigur som alla ville träffa, speciellt från USA. Många hade läst om Benny och sett vad han skrivit men få hade träffat honom.

Tyvärr var Benny's fysik inte den bästa under konferensen och de sista åren men Benny var mycket glad över att få träffa gamla vänner här i Stockholm. 1994 fick Benny mottaga DESS' första hederspris på 10.000 kr och Benny var mycket glad för att få priset och han deltog i våra DESS-möten under 1994 och 1995. Vid mötet den 11 augusti 1995 fick Benny ännu en gång träffa sin gamla vokalist från 1939 Alice Babs. Vid 75-årsdagen hyllades Benny av Alice Babs och vännen och samarbetspartnern på senare år, Sjef Hoefsmitt. Se tidigare nummer av Bulletinen.

Benny var inte de stora åthävnarna man utan var mer tillbakadragen av naturen. Med sitt blida och vänfaste väsen skapade han alltid en trivsamt och förtroendefull stämning bland dem som kom honom nära. Noggrannhet, saklighet, systematik och logik präglade hans unika gärning. Han var en förgrundsgestalt inom sitt område. Detta hade måhända aldrig blivit möjligt utan livsvarigt och lojalt stöd av familjen. Under alla år fanns ständigt hustrun Birgit vid hans sida biträdande med ett otal praktiska göromål.

För värden av det ellingtonska musikeriet har en viktig kugge nu upphört att fungera. Må Bennys ande och gärning inspirera till fortsatta strävanden på den av honom inslagna vägen.

Göran Wallén

MERCER ELLINGTON

Mercer Kennedy Ellington who recently died in Copenhagen was born on 11th March 1919 in Washington. His parents were Duke and Edna Ellington. As well as Duke, Mercer had as second Christian name Kennedy which was the surname of Duke's mother's family. He lived his childhood in a musical environment, not only due to the growing celebrity of his father but also due to the fact that his mother Edna was a good piano player.

In the late twenties his parents separated and Mercer spent as much time as possible with his father and with his musicians. He studied in Evander Child High School and later in Columbia University and Julliard showing definite gifts for music and mathematics. He wanted to enter the aircraft industry and even worked for a while in Republic Aircraft. Duke was of the opinion that there was no future for a black man in aviation and Mercer therefore concentrated on music, playing several instruments among them trumpet and alto-sax.

When Duke left for Europe in 1939, Billy Strayhorn appeared in the Ellington family. He lived with Mercer and Ruth, Duke's sister. Billy Strayhorn started to write arrangements for Duke's small groups and later for the big band. Mercer, mainly influenced by his father, wrote also arrangements. With Strayhorn's help he became for the first time leader of a band where some excellent musicians played like Dizzy Gillespie and Clark Terry.

When in 1941 a dispute occurred between ASCAP and the Radio, all ASCAP composers, and Duke was one of them, disappeared from the broadcasts. This is when Mercer Ellington was credited of wonderful pieces like "Things Ain't What They Used To Be", "Blue Serge", "Moon Mist" and "John Hardy's Wife". How much was from Duke's pen in these pieces is difficult to say but they were probably written together by Mercer and Duke. In 1943 Mercer was drafted by the Army and he played in a service band lead by Sy Oliver. After the war he had his own band which was so successful that it became Savoy's house band. The competition was hard and Mercer had to meet difficult times which forced him to disband. It is at around this time that a difficult relation between father and son really commenced. On one side Duke was proud of his son's achievements. On the other side he thought that two Ellingtons in the business would do harm to both. He sometimes helped Mercer and at other stages neglected or discouraged him.

After the end of Mercer's band Duke was there to launch Mercer Records, a short-lived record company with however some first class recordings. Mercer and partner Leonard Feather did their best but the lack of strong financial backing forced them to close the doors of the house.

In the fifties Mercer left the music field for a few years. When he came back he acted as manager for Cootie Williams's band, became musical director for Della Reese and leader of different bands. He made two big band records for Coral, "Stepping Into Swing Society" and "Colors In Rhythm".

In the sixties Mercer became a successful disc-jockey until one day in 1965 Duke called him and asked him to join his band. From then on Mercer played the trumpet in the orchestra, but mainly as a section musician. At the same time he became the manager of his father's band. In fact Duke badly needed to have a reliable manager as he had endured several bad expe-

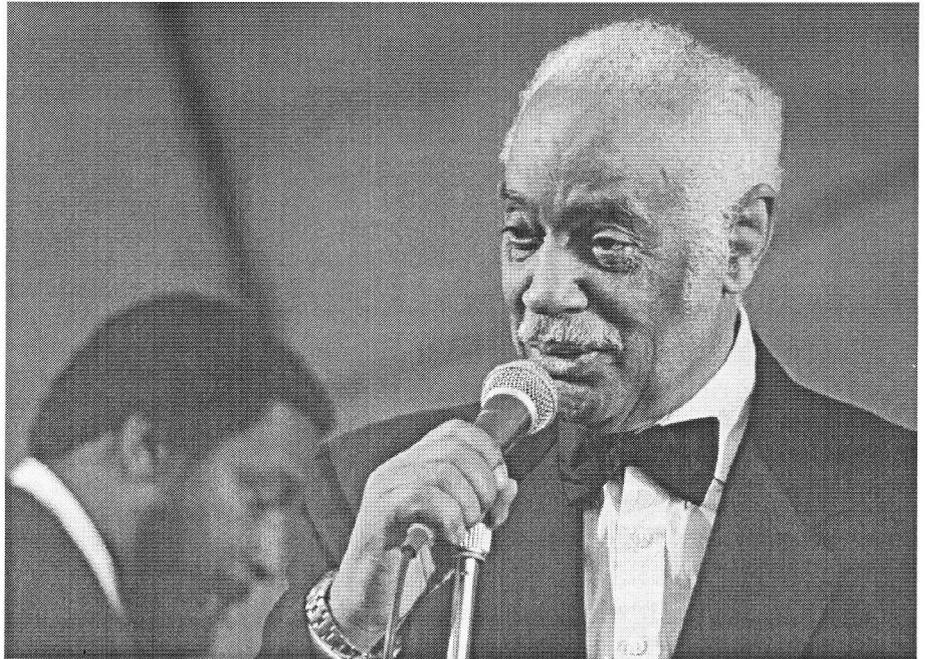


Foto Christer Landergren

riences, such as the man in charge of the band disappearing with all the money, if possible as far away as possible from home like once in Helsinki.

Merger was also called by Duke in order to put some discipline in the band. He did it with great professionalism although he met trouble with many veterans, especially those who years back had taken him on their knees. The most difficult man to accept the new rules was Duke himself and the usual conflicting relationship between father and son was again revived. I am any way grateful for ever to Mercer for the way he took care of Paul Gonsalves when he was sick in his very last years.

After the death of Ellington, as Mercer usually called him when speaking of his father, the son took care of an orchestra which became fairly different from the one we used to know. This band was in the seventies excellent and the records ("Continuum") usually of a high level. Mercer Ellington was indeed a first-rate musician but it is clear that his works were overshadowed by the fame of his father and he can certainly be considered as a frustrated musician. He conducted the orchestra for the show "Sophisticated Ladies" and received a Grammy in 1988 for the CD "Digital Duke" but the Duke Ellington band never really became his.

Merger Ellington was a friendly person but he developed a kind of duality which can be compared to the way Duke sometimes acted. In fact, he had all the characteristics of having a syndrome which he could not overcome: To be the son of a famous father.

He was maintaining Ellington's name high and was quick to take offense occasionally. Unfortunately he also attacked musicians who had played during long years in Duke's band when they used the word "Ellingtonians" or forced Ellington Societies to change their name (for instance the New York one where Duke liked to meet friends !)



In the seventies the band lead by Mercer was playing mainly Duke's music. As I said above the concerts were often excellent but the magic of the sound was gone with the maestro and nobody could blame Mercer for this. While he was still playing with his father, here and there some of his own arrangements were added to the program. I usually found them interesting and quite different from Duke's ones. I encouraged him to follow his own way.

Years later when he conducted the band most of the program played was Duke's music except two or three numbers which were written by Mercer. After the concert, I told him how much I enjoyed these new pieces. I thought candidly that time was coming for him to really show his abilities. He looked

at me and just said: "You cannot put Ellington down". Gosh! Mercer!

Alexandre Rado

Thank you Alexandre Rado for this obituary over Mercer Ellington. We all mourn the loss of Mercer Ellington and our thoughts goes to the Ellington family.

Mercer Ellington died on February 8th in a hospital in Copenhagen. A memorial service was held in Saint Peters Church in New York on February 18th. Amongst many people in the church Clark Terry was there and he played beautifully "Come Sunday".

Göran Wallén

RAPPORT FRÅN KLUBBMÖTET DEN 25 MARS 1996

Cirka 60-talet medlemmar hade infunnit sig till nämnda möte i Salénhuset. Tyvärr råkade den valda dagen för mötet sammanfalla med ett annat jazzarrangemang i Stockholm, vilket gjorde att flera medlemmar ställdes inför en valsituation, som kanske drabbade båda arrangörerna på ett negativt sätt. En viss samordning tycks vara påkallad inför framtiden.

Men stämningen och underhållningen var det inget fel på. Från Gävle hade Göran Olson infunnit sig med det av Lasse Lindgren ledda Vasa Big Band. Det är fantastiskt vad ungdomar under den rätta ledningen kan åstadkomma i jazzväg. Som vår ordförande uttryckte det så behöver man verkligen inte befara någon brist i återväxten när man hör dessa 19 "vältränade" ungdomar framföra verk av The Maestro.

Självklart inledde man med en dynamisk version av "Take The 'A' Train" följt av "Don't Get Around Much Anymore" och "Come Sunday" med ett fint vokalinslag av Anna Agnas. Sedan följde ett arrangemang av Mikael Råberg på "Caravan" som till stora delar var en ny tackling på det välkända numret. Ännu en utmärkt vokalist, Sara Kräft, fick vi höra i "Sophisticated Lady", som Lasse Lindgren med viss envishet ville nämna i pluralis med hänvisning till att det refererade till tre damer i Pittsburgh ur Duke's bekantskapskrets. Det må förhålla sig hur det vill med detta men kanske hade Lasse den kända musikalerna i tankarna. Följde så en fin version av "Rockin' In Rhythm" med alla de rätta effekterna. Lasse Lindgren fick så visa sin skicklighet på trumpet i ett framförande av "The Shepherd". Tankarna gick osökt till Cootie Williams, som säkert hade beundrat framförandet. Som avslutning spelades ännu ett Råberg-arrangemang; "Things Ain't What They Used To Be".

Efter en kaffepaus tog vår hedersgäst över. Andrew Homzy's besök i Sverige råkade lyckligtvis sammanfalla med vårt möte så vad var mera lämpligt än att låta honom få prata om något Ellingtonaktigt. Andrew befann sig i Stockholm som Sveriges Radios gäst och när detta läses har han haft ett framförande i Berwaldhallen med radiojazzgruppen av Charlie Mingus' "Epitaph". Andrew är musikforskare och tillika storbandsledare. Han är en ofta

förekommande talare vid de årliga Ellingtonkonferenserna. Denna kväll hade Andrew valt att berätta för oss litet om Duke's och Strayhorn's arrangemang på "Where Or When". Vi känner ju alla till en LP-utgåva betitlad "Ellington Indigos" där Paul Gonsalves gör ett utomordentligt vackert solo i just "Where Or When". Andrew spelade upp numret för oss samtidigt som han via overhead visade Strayhorn's arrangemang och de olika finesser som kunde utläsas i detta. Det har varit en vedertagen uppfattning att detta arrangemang skrevs 1957 just för Gonsalves men Andrew kunde genom sin forskning visa att det faktiskt skrevs som ett vokalnummer redan 1943 men förblivit liggande oanvänt tills man beslöt använda det 14 år senare med Gonsalves som "vokalist". Andrew berättade också litet om samarbetet mellan Duke och Charlie Mingus och illustrerade detta med ett Mingusverk betitlat "The Clown" framfört live av Duke.

Sedan blev det kammarjazz. Vår "huspianist" om man får kalla honom så - Davor Kajfes uppträdde tillsammans med Csaba Deseo - ungersk violinist på tillfälligt besök i Stockholm. Förutom Ellingtonnummer som "Don't Get Around", "Sophisticated Lady" och "Satin Doll" fick vi också höra Miles Davis' "All Blues", "Star Dust", "Sweet Georgia Brown", Charlie Parker's "Now's The Time" och avslutningsvis Davor's paradnummer "Lush Life" som vi alla minns från Konserthuset under Ellington '94.

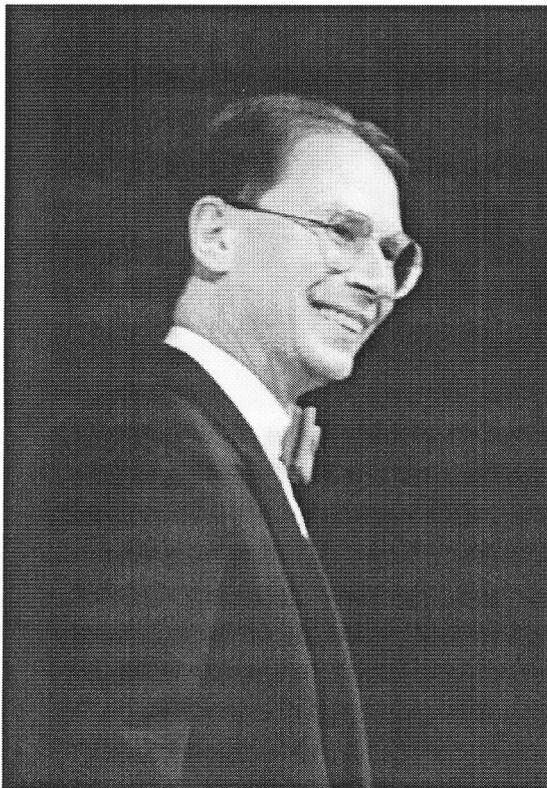
Innan vi tvingades utrymma lokalen blev det tid över att se en video med Duke. Den var från Holland 1958. Speciellt intressant var att se några ovanligare nummer som "My Funny Valentine" med Jimmy Hamilton och Quentin Jackson och "Mr Gentle And Mr Cool" med Shorty Baker och Ray Nance. Filmen avslutades med en "Medley" där vi fick bl.a. se och höra en sångare som orsakade litet huvudbry. Så småningom kunde konstateras att det var Ozzie Bailey.

Nästa möte är planerat till den 9 september. Kallelse kommer i god tid.

Bo Hauffman



Vasa Big Band. Foto Alf Lavér



Vår kanadensiske gästföreläsare. Foto Olle Lindholm

ANDREW HOMZY I STOCKHOLM OCH FRAMFÖR "EPITAPH" AV CHARLIE MINGUS

En av våra stora Ellingtonkännare Andrew Homzy från Montreal kom till Stockholm den 21 mars för att framföra Charlie Mingus' stora verk "Epitaph". Andrew Homzy har intressant not Duke Ellington, Charlie Mingus samt Kenny Clarke/Francy Boland storband som specialitet. naturligtvis ordnade vi det så att han också kunde komma till oss på vårt möte den 25 mars och hålla ett föredrag. Föredraget handlade om "Where Or When" och "UMMG". Se Bo Haufmans rapport om föredraget och besöket. En bilaga med notblad och noteringar medföljer.

Bakgrunden till Andrew Homzy's besök är att Lars-Göran Ulander från P2 Musik hörde Andrew Homzy berätta om relationen mellan Charlie Mingus och Billy Strayhorn på Ellington-konferensen i New York 1993. Via vår konferens i Stockholm 1994 växte sedan en idé fram om att framföra "Epitaph" i Stockholm. "Epitaph" blev aldrig framförd mer än i brottstycken 1962 av Charlie Mingus själv. Detta försök blev en flopp men finns att köpa på skiva. Rolf Ericson var med då och han har sagt att ingenting fungerade bra vid detta tillfälle. Anledningen var bl.a. att Charlie Mingus fick 5 veckor kortare tid att färdigställa materialet på än beräknat.

Well, Andrew Homzy satt på 80-talet och katalogiserade Charlie Mingus' material och då fann han 20 st partiturer som han inte visste vad det var, men samtidigt låg där de partiturer som användes 1962, och det var bra några få stycken. När han sedan började studera dess okända partiturer litet närmare fann han att alla partiturer hörde tillsammans. Det var inte enskilda kompositioner utan det var ett helt verk och musik för nästan 3 timmar okänt material. Skrivet för 30 man stor orkester. Ofattbart !! Vilken upptäckt !!! Enligt Andrew Homzy talade inte Charlie Mingus själv så mycket om detta verk, som kanske jazzens mest omfattande skrivna enskilda verk.

Den 5 januari 1989 framfördes "Epitaph" på Lincoln center i New York under ledning av Andrew Homzy och Gunther Schuller för första gången som helhet. Alla musiker från 1962 var med, utom en och det var Rolf Ericson.

Så det var med stor spänning som P2 Musik ordnade denna möjlighet med ett framförande av "Epitaph" med en förstärkt Radiojazzgrupp, 30 man, under ledning av Lennart Åberg den 28 mars. Repetitionerna var under 7 dagar från kl. 10.00 till kl. 18.00 och musikerna fick jobba mer än vanligt med detta svåra verk. "Epitaph" framfördes i något nerkortad version men ändå över 2 timmar och direktsändes i P2 Musik med Andrew Homzy som dirigent. Solister var bl.a. Ulf Johansson, Johan Hörlén, Fredrik Ljungqvist och Peter Asplund och som speciellt inbjuden solist var naturligtvis Rolf Ericson och därmed var cirkeln sluten med alla musiker som deltog 1962.

Andrew Homzy lovordade de svenska musikerna och ansåg att de svenska musikernas kvaliteter och kunnande var minst lik stor som de amerikanska 1989, d.v.s., ett gott betyg till våra svenska musiker.

Göran Wallén

NY SKIVA

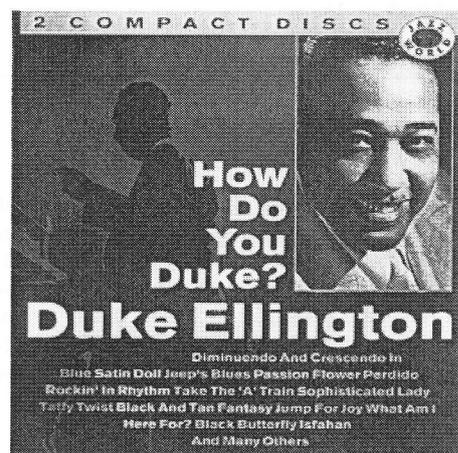
DUKE ELLINGTON. HOW DO YOU DUKE?

Jazz World JWD 102.307

En otroligt spirituell albumtitel, eller hur ?

Materialet på denna dubbel-CD är inte nytt för Ellington-samlaren men dyker nu upp, såvitt vi kan utrona, för första gången på CD. Ursprungligen uppenbarade sig materialet i den box om 5 LP som Mercer Ellington och Stanley Dance gav ut på märket M.F. Production för så där en 15 år sedan. Utgåvan fick den gången utstå en viss kritik för avsaknaden av alla diskografiska uppgifter. Senare har emellertid DEMS klargjort detta för oss. Materialet kom sedan i 5 singel LP med diskografiska uppgifter på märket Black Lion. Mercer och Stanley Dance har valt materialet med stor omsorg. Detta är Duke från slutet 50-

talet och början 60-talet när han är som bäst. Inspejningarna härstammar både från live sessions och studio sessions. Cirka två tredjedelar av LP-materialet är med på denna utgåva. För den som inte har LP-utgåvorna rekommenderas ett inköp.



SACRED CONCERT I SOFIA KYRKA I STOCKHOLM

Den 27 april hade Kulturamas elevkör en lördagskonsert i Sofia Kyrka på Vita Berget på Söder. Programmet hette "Duke Ellington: Sacred Concert". Olle Lindholm och undertecknad besökte Sofia Kyrka en vacker vårdag och blev glatt överraskade att få se så många människor samlas och lyssna till Kulturamas elevkör. Alice Babs kan vara stolt över att så många ungdomar är intresserade av att följa i hennes fotspår, d.v.s. även i Duke Ellington's musikaliska fotspår och att Duke's kyrkomusik numera är en självklar musik i svenska kyrkor.

KULTURAMA
ELEVKÖR
Duke Ellingtons
SACRED CONCERT
lör 27 april
SOFIA KYRKA
40 kr

Under ledning av Åsa Jingbro framfördes bl.a. Heaven, Almighty God, It's Freedom, Ain't But The One samt Tell Me It's The Truth. Vokalisten som överraskade oss mest med ett mycket nyanserat och moget framförande var Ulrika Beijer. Ulrika sjöng också till pianoackompanjemang Lush Life. Altsax och tenorsax spelades av Josch harris, som visade sig solistiskt i In A Sentimental Mood.

Utöver musiken berättades det även om hur kyrkomusiken väste fram och hur tidsandan var när musiken skrevs och hur den är uppbyggd.

En trevlig vårdag avslutades med en efterföljande promenad och fundering på om Duke Ellington är mera känd i dag i kyrkan hos allmänheten än med sin orkester.

Lägg namnet Ulrika Beijer på minnet. Henne får vi kanske höra mera av längre fram.

Göran Wallén

Nya böcker att vänta

David Hajdu's biografi över Billy Strayhorn, "Lush Life: A Biography of Billy Strayhorn", finns nu på bokhandelsdiskarna i USA och lär väl snart dyka upp även på denna sidan Atlanten. I samband med bokutgåvan kommer Verve Records att ge ut en CD betitlad: "Lush Life: The Billy Strayhorn Songbook" (314 529 908-2). CD'n påstås innehålla Strayhorn-kompositioner inspelade av olika Verve-artister.

Eddie Lambert författade redan 1959 en bok om Duke Ellington men arbetade sedan under större delen av 80-talet på en ny bok, som dessvärre inte blev fullbordad eftersom Eddie Lambert beklagligtvis gick bort i slutet av 80-talet. Men boken var i det närmaste färdig och har nu avslutats av andra och kommer till hösten att ges ut av Scarecrow Press under titeln "Duke Ellington: A Listener's Guide".

W.E. Timmer har hittills gett ut tre versioner av sin "Ellingtonia" som väl närmast uppfattas som en diskografi även om den i egentlig mening inte är någon diskografi utan snarare en fullständig listning av Duke's alla inspelningstillfällen. Förutom orkesterns sammansättning och inspelningsdatum uppges endast skivmärke (utan nummer) för originalutgåvan. Eftersom det hela tiden upptäcks nya inspelningar med Duke har Timmer funnit det angeläget att nu ge ut en reviderad fjärde upplaga av sin "Ellingtonia - The Recorded Music of Duke Ellington and His Sidemen". Även detta alster ges ut av Scarecrow.

Bo Hauffman

ETT TELEFON- SAMTAL MED MERCEDES ELLINGTON

Vi har talat med Mercedes Ellington och beklagat sorgen efter hennes pappa Mercer Ellington's död. Genom denna tragiska händelse uppstår helt naturligt frågor som berör familjen Ellington men också frågan om hur "The Duke Ellington Famous Orchestra" kommer att fortsätta sin aktivitet.

Mercedes berättade då att hon ledde orkestern vid ceremonin i New York och under några avtalade kontrakt efter begravningen men att man nu avvaktar det fortsatta arbetet med orkestern i alla fall till under mars månad då detta skrivs. En annan idé är att någon av barnbarnen till Mercer Ellington skall ta över ledarskapet.

Vi får hoppas att de personer som nu träder till kring orkestern med förnyade krafter kommer att lösa dess orkesterfrågor. Att namnet förpliktar är väl minst sagt ett understatement.

För övrigt så arbetar Mercedes som konsult inom dans och balett och är idag ganska busy. Lycka till Mercedes med ditt arbete.

Göran Wallén

Sad news:

Malcolm G. "Big Luv" Taylor Sr - trombonist, died February 25, 1996, in Anderson, Indiana. He was 71 years old. Malcolm was a member of the Duke Ellington trombone section from June 1970 to April 1972. He also did a 5 year stint with the orchestra under the direction of Mercer Ellington from 1975 to 1980. He is survived by large loving family which includes 17 grandchildren and 10 grand-grandchildren.

Nu finns SDI-företagen på nitton
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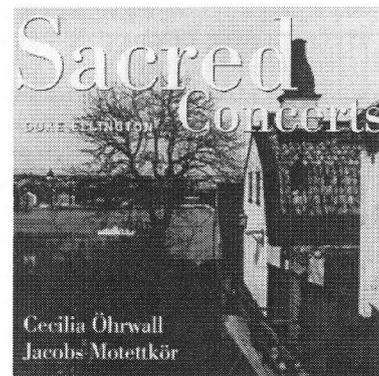
DIN TRYGGHET FÖR EN LÖNSAM

DATAINVESTERING

SDI-
FÖRETAGEN
kan genom ett unikt sam-
arbete erbjuda Dig kvalitet,
leveranssäkerhet samt hög
kompetens inom kom-
munikation och nätverk.



SACRED CONCERTS I KUNGSHOLMENS KYRKA



Cecilia Öhrwalls nya CD

Cecilia Öhrwall solist och arrangör med Jacobs Motettkör. Den 10 mars framförde Cecilia Öhrwall, vår medlem i DESS, musik ur Duke Ellingtons "Sacred Concerts" i Kungsholmens Kyrka. Inför en stor publik framfördes följande arrangemang: Come Sunday, Supreme Being, Freedom, In The Beginning God, Heaven, Is God A Three Letter Word for Love, My Love, T.G.T.T., Almighty God, Ain't But The One samt Praise God And Dance. I Cecilia's band, som dirigerades av Peter Hallström, ingick Mårten Lundgren tp, Amanda Sedgwick as/cl, Johan Eklind tb, Charlie Malmberg bs, Ove Lundin p, Teddy Walther b och Johan Löfcrantz tr.

Arrangemanget i kyrkan blev mycket lyckat och publiken reagerade mycket positivt med applåder, som numera är vanligt i kyrkan. Cecilia's arrangemang följer Duke's intentioner mycket fint och hon framför som sångsolist Duke's texter med stor känsla.

la. Cecilia utvecklar hela tiden sina arrangemang på ett mycket förnämligt sätt.

Hela konserten blev inspelad för att ges ut på CD. Den kommer till sommaren.

Detta var en av flera framförda Sacred Concerts av Cecilia under senare år och vi får hoppas att flera Sacred Concerts framförs även i framtiden av Cecilia.

Lycka till Cecilia, vi går gärna till kyrkan och lyssnar på Dig, Din kör och Duke Ellington's musik.

Göran Wallén

HERB JEFFRIES THE BRONZE BUCKAROO

Sekreteraren har haft nöjet att få träffa Herb Jeffries under en eftermiddag och prata med honom om både gammalt och nytt, mest gammalt. Herb bor i en lägenhet i en av Los Angeles förstäder. Han bodde tidigare i en villa men den blev totalförstörd vid senaste jordbävningen och hans nuvarande bostad är endast provisorisk betong. Herb har nu passerat de 80 åren men är still going strong, kanske tack vare en betydligt yngre och mycket vacker fru. Han uppträder fortfarande och spelar in skivor och han påpekar ofta att han ser sig som en "star". Emellertid skönjer man en viss bitterhet, som grundar sig i det faktum att Herb inte anser sig bli tillräckligt uppmärksam av jazzmännskor i allmänhet men kanske Ellingtonfans i synnerhet eftersom han är den ende nu levande från Duke's guldår 1940/41. Han anser sig ha mycket att berätta från dessa år och är oförstående till alla de böcker och artiklar som skrivits under årens lopp utan att någon gjort sig besväret att intervjua Herb om den gamla tiden. Herb är också en mycket rasmedveten person som har mycket att säga om de färgades situation i dagens USA. Han är också en stor filosof med religiösa böjelser och har författat många dikter och sångtexter med dylika motiv. Herb är minst sagt lättintervjud. Han pratar gärna om sig själv som den store egocentriker han är. Man ställer en fråga och sedan håller Herb låda. Här följer första delen av ett långt samtal med Herb Jeffries som inleddes med ett ömsesidigt utbyte av nyutkomna CD. Åberg & Ericsons nya CD mot Herbs senaste CD, The Bronze Buckaroo Rides Again:

HJ: This is for you (CD). It's a new one.

Q: Thank you. I have another record of you where you appear with a trio. I think it is a girl playing the keyboard.

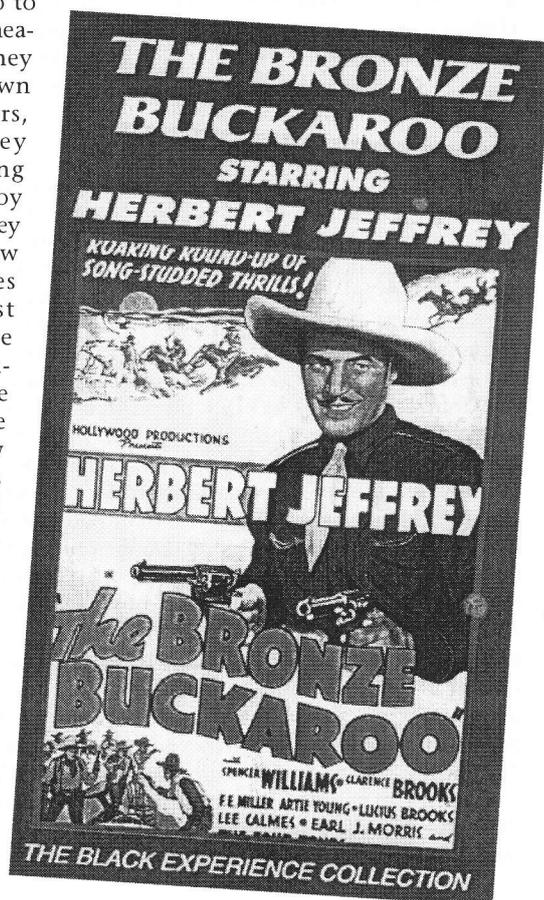
HJ: Yes. You are probably talking about a CD I did a couple of years ago called "World On A String" with a wonderful pianist, Karen Hernandez. I liked that session very much. I am not always too pleased with my recording sessions. I don't know if any artist when finished up is totally and completely happy with it. This new one I am quite happy with, we took 16 months to make it.

Q: The Bronze Buckaroo this CD is called. I remember I have a LP with a live recording of an Ellington session from Boston I think and the announcer there says; "And now Herb Jeffries, The Bronze Buckaroo. You may have seen him on the silver screen now and then."

HJ: Yes, Duke always used to announce and call Ivie Anderson the "California Song Bird" and then when he introduced me he would always call me The Bronze Buckaroo.

Q: What history has that name of yours. How did it come about?

HJ: Well, in 1935 when I was traveling throughout the South with Earl Hines's band I had my first experience with prejudice because I am from Detroit, and we lived in a mixed ethnic neighborhood peacefully together and we shared the culture. And of course I didn't know anything about discrimination until I went South and I saw discrimination everywhere. Blacks could not go to the white theaters. And they had their own little theaters, where they were playing white cowboy pictures. They loved the cowboy pictures and almost everywhere we went throughout the South there were cowboy pictures playing at all of the black theaters. In my studies in school in Michigan I had understood, because we had some education on the black cowboy, that



black cow boys were a very important part of our culture and the pioneering of America. When I saw just white cow boy pictures playing there I said "My goodness, there should be some black cow boy pictures made". So the children of the darker skin should be able to identify. Black boys also wanted to be either Buck Jones or Tom Mix. So it was then that I decided to take a course of action trying to promote a bonus picture and it took me about two years. I was not successful in raising finance until I came out to California.

Q: Did you want to produce it yourself? Is that what you mean when you say you wanted to do it.

HJ: No, I wanted to do it so that the black population who lived throughout the South who were watching these white cow boy pictures in the black theaters. I felt that little children of other ethnic groups, who have dark skins should be able to go in to the theater and say, "Hey, I can be a cow boy. Not just Caucasians". So I thought that that picture had to be made. I wasn't particularly interested in playing the lead part. It was not my idea. I promoted the picture. I wanted to see it done and so I came to California and I found a man who was interested and we cast for many different leads, other people to play it, but we couldn't find a man who could ride, sing and act. We could find a black man who could ride but he couldn't act or he couldn't sing. And we wanted to make a singing motion like the Gene Autrey, like Roy Rogers. These were the popular motion pictures, singing cow boys, and they were the big popular stars. So we wanted to make a singing cow boy picture with a black cow boy. Well, finally we couldn't find anyone to do it but I could do all those things. I was raised on a farm in Michigan riding horses since I was eight years old. I could ride and I thought I could act, because I've been on the stage most of my life performing and of course singing, yes, I could do that so they gave me a screen test and they said OK, great, you'll be the lead. So we made the first all black cow boy picture ever made on planet Earth. It was made here in California in 1937 by a company by the name of Jedwill Production and it was called "Harlem On The Prairie". That was the first all black picture made. The second one we made was very successful. It was called "Harlem Rides the Range". The third one we made was called "Two-Gun Man From Harlem" and I got sick of the word "Harlem". White producers and distributors liked the word Harlem because it represented black community. Of course after I was well established as a cow boy star in the pictures I decided; "Hey, let's change the name, I want to make something called The Bronze Buckaroo".

Q: How did you get on to that name?

HJ: Because bronze is a name that represented people with darker skin and Buckaroo is a cow boy name. They called each other buckaroos because they are out there riding these broncos and sometimes getting "bucked off" you know. So I decided to call it The Bronze Buckaroo, and I became that person in that movie. The Afro-Americans come in many flavors. They come in shades that are so faire they look like you. That's because some propaganda was put out during the civil war that if a man had two drops of black blood that was so powerful evidently that it turned him into a black man. So therefore we have now many shades of people who have that super blood in them which is Afro-American blood. So, you know, that's the way it has been here in USA. If a man had just a few drops of African blood in him that blood changed him into black blood. I mean that was decided by the white rulers of our discriminated country back in those days. It was never decided by Afro-Americans. So I always thought; "Gee, that's a pretty powerful blood so how much ever I have in me, it's some kind of a special blood". The only regret I have today at my vintage of being an octogenarian that I don't have more of it if it is that powerful. Well, you know there is another thing, I've been doing quite a bit of research because I'm just finishing up a story now I'm calling "Walking My Shoes" which is about how the black cow boy came about. Our country was pioneered from 13 states when we moved westward and few people know

that one out of every four cow boys that pioneered our country was black.

Q: You don't get that impression from the western movies that we have been overthrown with from the studios over here. It is always white cow boys.

HJ: Yes. Let me tell you how it can be verified. No. 1 - during the years before the civil war we had something called the "underground train". The underground train was arranged to help slaves escape out of the South which was being in slavery practice before the civil war and that is one of the reasons why the civil war came about. The underground train helped slaves to escape. It was very difficult and when slaves were caught they were killed or either taken back to their masters and very brutally punished for trying to escape. That is a matter of history and a fact. However, what we failed to put into our history and what is coming out quite prevalent and certainly in my research, is that one of the great places for slaves to escape to where the white slave owners couldn't get them back was in the Indian territories. And the Indian tribes would take them in. As a matter of fact in Florida we have a tribe called the Seminal. The Seminal today by the Indians themselves are called the black tribe because so many slaves escaped into this Seminal tribe and integrated into the tribe that it is well without question probably the largest immigration of all of American tribes and the native Americans. Many tribes took the slaves in. As far away as the Chippewas up in Canada and Northern Michigan and down and the Siouxs took in black slaves. This happened prior to the civil war. When blacks went into the Indian camps they assimilated into the camp using the customs and the traditions of the Indians meaning they had to be raised as braves just exactly the same and going through the same conditions as Indian braves and Indian youngsters went through. And it wasn't hard for the slaves for this reason. Their African culture was very much like the American Indian culture so they could assimilate into it very easy. So they also became great riders, fantastic riders, because they learned how to ride without a saddle. So after the civil war when the social structure began to change itself into a kind of a freedomlike way of life, then the black cow boy came out as great riders and a lot of the ranchers wanted them. One of our greatest men in history was a man by the name of James Beckworth who was part of the Indian tribes, learned the Indian culture, spoke many Indian tongues. He became a great scout and he could get wagon trains through because he could pow-pow with the Indians and speak their language and he could get white wagon trains though when white scouts couldn't do it. And so came the birth of black drovers because black drovers could herd cattle through to California from Kansas and from Texas and those places a lot easier than the white drovers could. Amongst the cow boys there was very little discrimination if any at all because the black man who proved himself as a cow boy assimilated right into the cow boy culture as one of the men. It was how good could he perform and had nothing to do with his epidermis, with his skin. So this is important that we don't hear any history of American education and therefore it doesn't get to Europe.

Q: So that is the background for The Bronze Buckaroo.

HJ: Well, The Bronze Buckaroo had a lot do with that. You remember that was back in 1937 and I wasn't as educated along the lines of our social structure and how our history came about. Here in my later years I have made a great effort to do a lot of research and a lot of writing on this subject. I think that we need to know about the 99th pursuit squadron - black pilots in World War II who went out there. They were trained in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and where they were not wanted down there. Yet they went out and were fighting against the Germans, The Luftwaffe, and shooting them down, and yet coming back to this country after having done so much heroic deeds and hoping to make this place become a democracy where every man should be entitled to civil rights and to the freedoms that even

today men struggling here to have. The 99th pursuit squadron was a very heroic air force squadron. It was an isolated squadron discriminated against. We had discrimination in the armed forces unfortunately. That didn't heal itself until we got a man by the name of Adam Clayton Powell who got in there and said; "hey, this has to change and we have to have equality in the federal government". And so even in the federal government we had that problem, you see. However, today we've seen a great change and a wonderful change and I am very happy and proud of the change but nevertheless we still have the unwritten law and the unwritten law seems to be much in existence. However, it is changing now. We are getting presidents up there and we are getting men in Congress today. We finally even got an Indian in the Senate. Can you believe that. An American Indian finally has arrived at that point and now he is beginning to try to get some political representation for those wonderful people, who this country belonged to in the very beginning and who are living on reservations that are almost unfor-givable. Nevertheless all of that has made the challenge wonderful so we are not living in a lethargic nation who has nothing else to do but sit around and say; Oh, how beautiful we all are. The challenge makes this an exiting adventure place to live. Music has charmed and soothed the savage beast. Men like Duke Ellington whom I love and admire and adore have been able to move about using that tool of music with great charm and great elegance and have been able to break down barriers all over the world. I learned a lot from him.

Q: Before we reach Duke we were at three pictures you made as The Bronze Buckaroo. Are those pictures still around ?

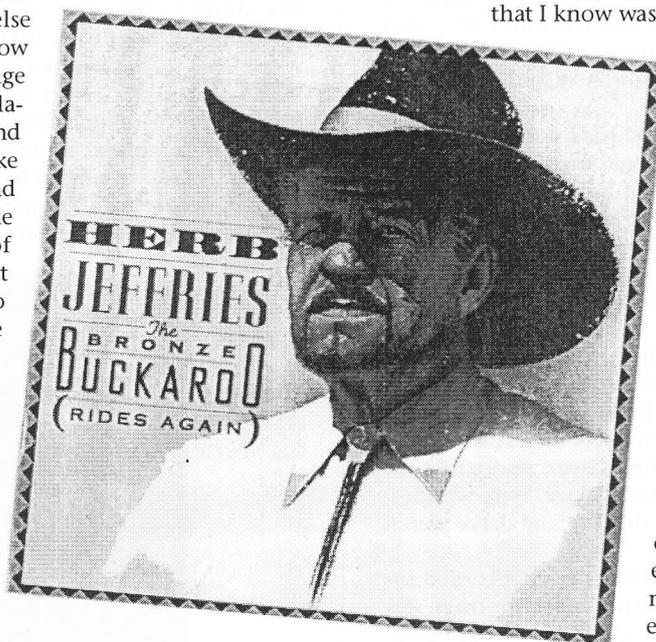
HJ: As a matter of fact one of the biggest distributors here in California is a company called Timeless. Timeless now has repackaged my films and I will give you one to take back to Sweden.

Q: Thank you. This will probably be shown in a future meeting of the Duke Ellington Society of Sweden. We use to show films.

HJ: Let me say this. You know when a man reaches a certain age and of course I'm gonna say this, when you become an octogenarian and you are still around there is something about the truth that becomes very important to you in your life. You can finally say what you want to say. What can it do to you. Are they gonna stop you or shoot you against the wall ? I mean, I can say what I want because what can they do ? Injure my career, I should have retired 10 years ago. I didn't want to. So I'm still doing things. I couldn't care less. So I have to say the truth ! And the truth is this: I've probably been one of the most supportive human beings of Duke Ellington and I am the last member of the great band. There is no one else left. I am not invited to any of these things (conferences). For some unknown reason England is the only one. They invited me twice and invited me the third time to come to the Soho Festival. Now for some unknown reason, and I don't know exactly what it is, whether the Ellington followers or people of today do not look upon Herb Jeffries as a jazz singer. Well, you know that's good because I'm not a jazz singer. I don't want to be typed. I'm a singer. And I sang everything with Ellington. I just didn't do jazz. If you look at me with Ellington you will find out I did ballad, I did jazz, I did a lot of things. I want it to be known that not even Stanley Dance has interviewed me. As close as I was to Duke and this is a thing that I say and I will say and let

it be known publicly. I am the only living witness of what happened during the heydays. I was there. Why is nobody asking me. Like I said I loved Duke. He is probably one of the greatest composers on this earth. Just you listen to all that beautiful music he composed and he created his own methods. He deviated from all the rules and regulations of what is so called regular methods of producing and composing music. He and Stravinsky probably decided that they themselves could decide what sounds would be called appetizing to the ear palate. And what was appetizing to the ear palate according to Duke was sometimes not in accordance with the rules. Such things as dissonances which many masters said you cannot do. He did it. And even had the challenge to write a thing called "Concerto for Clinkers". Put that in your pipe and smoke it out there, jazz lovers ! So if you want to talk about a great man whom you choose to follow then you should look at his diversity and how he was able to diversify music. Not only that, his great culture. Because he was a man who probably was one of the best dressed men in the world. There is no question in my mind. He was probably one of the best dressed men. No one

that I know was more articulant about how he introduced music and of his variety of philosophies. If you would just examine the titles of his songs. You will see that he was not prejudiced nor discriminated by any means, even the titles, such as "Black, Brown and Beige" because there is nobody white. I haven't seen a white human being on the face of this earth. If there is a white person out there he would look like the sheet I'm sleeping on. Something is radically wrong with his epidermis. He isn't even an albino because at least albinos have color. So "Black, Brown and Beige" represented a full spectrum of human beings on the face of this earth and if Mr. Ellington choose me to be the first male vocalist to ever work with his band, is somebody going to dispute his opinion?



He must have thought I had the capability of representing his band and I did for a number of years, I first joined in 1935. I didn't record with him but I toured theaters with him in 1935. He first found me in Detroit in a place called "The Plantation". I was singing in the bar. I joined his band in Indianapolis in 1935 and did theater tours with him. Later I came out to California and did my motion pictures. After doing my motion pictures Duke played at the Apollo Theater with my picture "The Bronze Buckaroo" at the same time. Later Duke saw me in Detroit and said; "Hey, will you come back and join my band again" and thereafter he introduced me as "The Bronze Buckaroo". We were doing four variety shows and four motion pictures. I did something in the reverse. Guys like Dick Haymes and Frank Sinatra were band singers that became movie stars and never went back to the bands. I was a band singer who became a movie star and then humbled myself to go back to sing with the Maestro, to become a vocalist after having been a motion picture star. This taught me humility, and it may sound like ego talking. No it's not, I'm talking academically now, so that this can be a part of history. Not here in the US which is highly edited. In Europe where for some unknown reason jazz seems to flourish and have a greater dignity there and even in Japan, than it does in our country where it was born. I mean we don't teach it in schools like we should be doing. 'We don't glorify this man Duke Ellington who will go down in history as Mozart and Beethoven of our times.

(To be continued)

ELLINGTON IN THE FIFTIES

Tom Detienne, f.d. ordförande i The Duke Ellington Society, New York Chapter, ger här sin personligt färgade syn på 50-talets Duke Ellington.

Duke Ellington had the finest band in the land at the start of the 50s. In a sense, this is faint praise, because there was so little competition. The "Big Band Era" had ended with World War II, and the new direction was to singers and smaller groups. Duke was "King" of a very small hill.

When the calendar changed to a new decade, Duke was recording for Columbia Records. The recording industry was making the transition from the ten inch 78 rpm, three-minute-limit recording, to the new ten and twelve inch LP records that would allow an artist to expand his creative horizons. It was a perfect vehicle for Duke and Billy Strayhorn.

Unfortunately, this was a period in which many of the former great musicians were no longer under the Ellington banner. In 1951, with the exodus of Johnny Hodges, Lawrence Brown and Sonny Greer, the only remaining giant from the glory days, was Harry Carney.

A year or so later, Duke signed a recording contract with Capitol Records, a company that had no idea how to handle or market his music. The band was filled with new, modern players, great musicians with different voices. The colors and the timbre of the music changed. It was always my contention that the heart of the band stopped beating when Johnny Hodges left. However, now I believe the band's biggest loss, at that time, was Sonny Greer. And while his replacements, Louis Bellson and Dave Black, were wonderful time keepers, they lacked the shading and drive so necessary to the Ellington sound.

Early in February, 1956, two albums were recorded for Bethlehem Records. The most exciting aspect of these sessions was the return of Hodges, "Courtesy Norgran Records." If you deduce that I am not overly fond of this period, you are correct. But still, Ellington is Ellington and thus far superior to any other musical organizations at the time.

However, by the end of the 50s, Duke Ellington had, arguably, the finest musical ensemble of his life. It started in 1956, when Johnny Hodges came back to anchor the greatest reed section in the history of jazz. Duke had re-signed with Columbia records and was ably assisted by his friend, Irving Townsend, in the selection and marketing of his music. 1956 was the year Duke was on the front page of Time Magazine, because of the second biggest selling jazz album of the year, "Ellington At Newport," which featured the revived "Diminuendo and Crescendo In Blue."

Ellington's creative juices were flowing. Johnny was back, and a wonderful, driving, swinging drummer, Sam Woodyard, was propelling the band. Inspirational and creative ideas abounded. "A Drum Is a Woman," an interesting album, but also an hour long television spectacular. "Anatomy of a Murder" was a marvelous record, but first and foremost, a big time motion picture. There were many more wonderful recordings and engagements. And in 1960, the circle was complete, when the great Lawrence Brown rejoined the trombone section, bringing with him his full round tone, plus a new sound for Lawrence, the plunger.

At this time Ellington was at the top of the mountain. Once again a force in the World of Music!!

Tom Detienne

SKIN DEEP

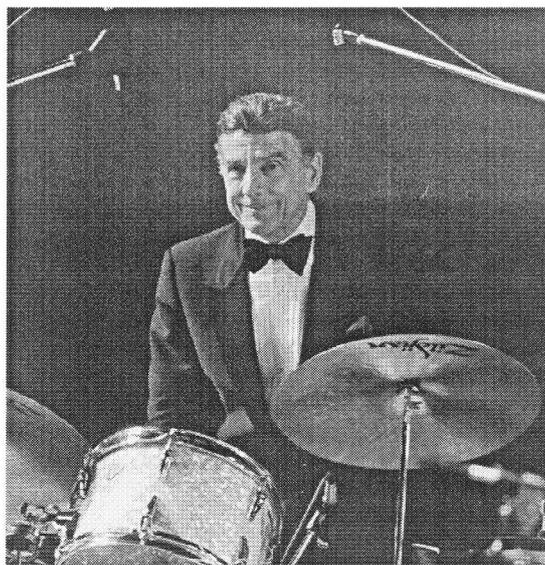
En av DESS' amerikanska medlemmar, Bruce Kenan, har fördjupat sig i studiet av "Skin Deep" som en följd av två nyligen utkomna återutgivningar. Bruce's studium är samtidigt en hyllning till Louis Bellson, en mycket behaglig personlighet, som vi ju hade möjlighet att träffa under Ellington '94.

HI-FI ELLINGTON UPTOWN (CD SRCS 7057, Sony Japan).

This recent CD reissue from Japan continues the long and important recording history of Louis Bellson's "Skin Deep". The composer, this composition, and previous releases of its August 1952 recording represent major changes in the world of Ellington in the early 1950's.

First, Louis Bellson brought new instrumental technology to the Ellington orchestra. He is the only musician who literally built a "chair" in the Ellington orchestra, adding a second bass drum to the drum set used by all major Ellington drummers that followed. The difference in style and technique between Bellson and Sonny Greer is as great as other replacement in the orchestra. Greer's approach goes back to early New Orleans' drummers such as Baby Dodds, while Bellson represents formal training and a contemporary approach he developed while working with other big bands. Not only did Bellson bring a new voice to the Ellington sound, he added a new solo capability, and composing talent. The swinging, rolling snare drum

Louis
Bellson.
Foto
Olle
Lindholm



of Greer was replaced by Bellson's cymbals playing in and around the orchestrations. And Bellson used his technique to add a dramatic and musical drum solo to the Ellington repertoire.

Bellson's solo voice was featured in his own composition "Skin Deep", which he established as a requirement for the drummers that followed. While not an Ellington piece, it remained active in the book, probably because it is an excellent vehicle to highlight both the drummer and his value to the sound of the orchestra. It features the new role of the drummer in an Ellington organization that had never sounded so clear and crisp in its rhythmic feel and accented parts. Bellson wrote and added his voice to dramatic rhythmic phrases. For example, "Skin Deep" begins with a dramatic fanfare, with drummed highlights. The cymbals then set the tempo for the first orchestra part, where the drummer plays a part with the ensemble, against section parts, with a soloist, and adds solo ideas and phrases. Rhythmic patterns are even more obvious in the second musical section, which concludes in a simpler melody before the second major drum solo. Bellson continued the Ellington tradition of featuring a lot of drum equipment, which with Greer sometimes included timpani and chimes. On this

solo Bellson played a cow bell, which had been part of a deluxe drum set in the 1940's and 1950's for dance band drummers who might play a Latin American rhythm. Bellson was one of the first to play two bass drums, a new capability, now common in rock bands, which was kept for a few years within the Ellington band. When he joined Ellington for two years, he added a solo voice and his own compositions (i.e. "The Hawk Talks" is another Bellson composition, pre-Ellington, that highlights the new sense of rhythmic attack he contributed to the Ellington sound). Most importantly, Louis Bellson brought the modern approach used by other famous big band drummers to Ellington, who used the new voice well in his own compositions and arrangements (including the other selections on the Uptown album), and featured Bellson's compositions, especially "Skin Deep".

The history of the releases of the 1952 studio recording of "Skin Deep" highlights another major change in the world of Ellington that happened at the time of the change in drummers. The era of LP records had just begun and Duke and Columbia producer George Avakian quickly responded to the extended format and the improved sound quality with new arrangements of established standards, several of which were included in this uptown album. "Skin Deep" was issued around the world in the old format, using both sides of a 78 rpm record. The original LP, Ellington Uptown (Columbia CK 40836), notes by Stanley Dance were added, and "Skin Deep" which had opened both LPs, was moved to the end of the album. This new "Hi-Fi" CD has all the selections, beginning with "Skin Deep". "Skin Deep" is one reason for the addition of "Hi-Fi" to the title "Ellington uptown", and partly responsible for the success of the "popular" LP in the early 1950's. The sound of

Bellson's drums, especially the two bass drums, attracted attention when played on the new hi-fi equipment developed at this time, especially woofer speakers able to reproduce the deep bass sounds. Demo records were made that included the dramatic and well recorded sounds of Bellson's solo on "Skin Deep". A similar solo was filmed in the Snader telefocal transcription "The hawk Talks". The Ellington Uptown CD greatly improved the sounds of Bellson on LP, and now the new CD improves the clarity of both highs and lows. The original 1952 recording continues to be a source for realistic sound, now in a "hi-fi" improvement of the previous CD version. Turn up the amplifier and Bellson really sounds live as his original "Skin Deep" can rattle window glass.

JAZZ FESTIVAL AT NEWPORT - ARMSTRONG, ELLINGTON (CD, A 13295, Columbia Special Products).

Here's a CD reissued of a hard to find LP of the "non-commercial" parts of the 956 "Ellington at Newport", which is the title of the very successful album featuring Paul Gonsalves in "Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue". Here is Sam Woodyard in "Skin Deep", a crowd pleaser Ellington included in major shows, festivals and concerts. Audience response to Woodyard's solo here is enthusiastic. For those who may not appreciate and enjoy watching or hearing any drum solo, there is at least one change for which Bellson's "Skin Deep" should get credit-adding a drum solo was a mini-break for the rest of the band who returned to the bandstand to conclude a set that would probably have been shorter if they hadn't given the drummer "some" (a solo).

Bruce Kennan

EARL AND THE DUKE

Under den här rubriken observerade vi en artikel i 15 januari-numret av The New Yorker författad av Stanley Crouch. Den handlar inte om Earl Hines och Duke, som man skulle kunna tro, utan om sångaren Earl Coleman och Duke. Vem var då Earl Coleman och vad hade han för beröringspunkter med Duke? Ja, beröringspunkterna är inte många bortsett från det faktum att Earl Coleman var en stor Ellingtonbeundrare. Anledningen till Crouch's artikel var det faktum att Coleman avled i juli förra året i en ålder av 70 år.

Earl Coleman är nämnd i Leonard Feather's Jazz Encyclopedia och man kan bl.a. läsa följande: "Coleman, Earl, singer, b. Port Huron, Mich., 8/12/25. Moved to Leland, Miss. at the age of two. Childhood friend of Jimmy Grissom. Fine ballad singer much admired by Charlie Parker." Han sjöng i flera band bl.a. Jay McShann's och Earl Hines'. Hans mest kända grammofoninspelning är "This Is Always" med Charlie Parker.

Som bekant turnerade Duke och bandet under trettioalet i sydstaterna boende i s.k. Pullman cars. Coleman, då i nedre tonåren och boende i staten Mississippi, var redan då en Ellingtonbeundrare och här följer ett utdrag ur Stanley Crouch's artikel som beskriver hans första intryck av Duke och bandet.

The last time I talked with him, the reddish-brown-skinned baritone recalled being a Southern kid on his bicycle more than fifty years ago and seeing posters that announced the arrival of the greatest band in the world. He told of a magical afternoon in Mississippi and of pedalling out to the train station, where he heard the sound of Duke Ellington's brass men warming up, the light hitting those silver or golden horns through which they eased so much heat and sophisticated feeling. Then he spoke of looking through the windows at the Ellingtonians, inside the private Pullman cars that sat on those Mississippi train tracks like luxury hotel rooms on wheels. He remembered the spit and polish of

the Negro men who were serving them, in movements swift but casual with authority. There were also thrilled and thrilling women there, all those fine brown felines visiting the artists who set the romantic standards for men from coast to coast, border to border.

That night, in the company of what was obviously an unforgettable brown-skinned beauty, Earl attended the dance where Ellington's band was performing. Negroes took to the floor on every tune, and whites sat behind ropes, enjoying Ellington's music and the floor show of romance and rhythm so superbly provided by the local people who became, in Dizzy Gillespie's words, 'the mirrors of the music.' Earl remembered that during intermission the smoothlooking Ellington sat at a table with the whites who ran the town, but that he sat not as the target of a joke or as some version of inferiority. He charmed and laughed and told tales as a man of talent and aristocratic bearing whose humanity took a back seat to no one's.

I now understand that whenever I heard Coleman sing or sat down with the man or spoke with him on the phone, he was always savoring that moment as a Mississippi dreamer in his teens, back down the staircase of time to the point where he saw just how far real talent could take someone, no matter where on the social spectrum that someone had come from."

LÄSARNAS INSÄNDARSPALT OCH INLÄGG I DEN MUSIKALISKA DEBATTEN

Bulletinen välkomnar inlägg och artiklar från både medlemmar och icke medlemmar.
Här följer en artikel skriven av Villy Bergström som var införd i Dala Demokraten den 29/1 1996.

MYTER OM ELLINGTON

Det brukar heta att Europa först erkände jazzen som konstform och inte bara underhållning. Det brukar också heta att Duke Ellington, en av jazzens störste, om inte den allra störste, först med sin Europaturné 1933 började se på sig själv som seriös konstnär, som kompositör och pianist, inte bara underhållare.

Det var efter Europaresan som Ellington började experimentera med längre musikaliska kompositioner än de vanliga treminuters stycken som kunde rymmas på den tidens lackskivor.

Det första längre verket var "Reminiscing In Tempo", 1935. Tidigare hade han skrivit ett verk av dubbel "schellack-längd", nämligen "Creole Rhapsody", 1931.

Det har också sagts om Ellington att han, när han stod på höjden av sin karriär, såg omkring 1940 och senare efter konserten vid Newportfestivalen 1956, som markerade en come back för Ellington hos den stora publiken, efter ett antal år i skymundan (för andra än Ellington-älskare), inte utnyttjade sin status för att föra de färgades talan i USA.

Ellington kunde ofta bo på de finaste hotellen, gå på vilka restauranger han ville, medan mindre kända medlemmar av hans orkester, som Harry Carney och Cootie Williams, nekades tillträde.

Ellington tycktes strunta i politik, bara intressera sig för musiken. Det var en anklagelse som framfördes av några av bopepokens musiker. De ledande figurerna i bopen hade större social medvetenhet än swingerans musiker. Nu är det självklart fel att stämpla Ellington som tillhörande Swing-eran. Tjugo år av Ellingtons karriär sammanföll visserligen med swing-eran och storbandsjazzen - 1930- och 1940-talen - men Ellington utgjorde naturligtvis sin egen era - Ellingtoneran.

Allt detta ges en intressant belysning, och många myter vederläggs i en nyutkommen bok, redigerad av Mark Tucker, "The Ellington Reader" (Oxford University Press, 1993).

Det är en bok på över 500 sidor, som innehåller artiklar om Ellington, recensioner av hans konserter och skivor, och Ellingtons egna artiklar om musik.

Den första recensionen är redan från 1923 då bandet hette "The Washingtonians", spelade i New York och leddes, inte av Ellington utan av banjoisten Elmer Snowden. Ellington presenterades som pianist och arrangör. När Tucker kommer fram till 1980-talet, tio år efter Ellingtons död 1974, är det självfal-

let bara fråga om ett litet urval av allt det som skrevs om Ellington.

Den första musikaliskt insiktsfulla artikeln om Ellington skrevs 1932 av R.D. Darrel i en tidskrift, "Disques" som normalt behandlade klassiska skivor.

Det var en insiktsfull analys av Ellingtons produktion från slutet av 1920-talet. 1926-27 var de år då Ellingtons musik lyftes till något alldeles nytt i USA:s och världens musikliv med inspelningar som "Black And Tan Fantasy" och "Creole Love Call".

Darrel skrev till Ellington och ville träffa honom. Men Ellington som alltid ville flyta ovanpå blev antagligen förskräckt över alla associationer till modern konstmusik som Darrel nämnde i brevet. Ellington avvisade Darrel.

Det är synd, för den intervjun kunde kanske ha löst gåtan om hur en traditionell negerorkester från Washington, som spelade på partyn och till dans under 1920-talet, och där få kunde läsa noter eller, än mindre, hade någon formell musikalisk utbildning, plötsligt 1926-27 lyfte sig själva och inledde ett av detta sekels märkligaste musikaliska projekt.

Det framgår tydligt, att de båda myter som nämndes inledningsvis - att Ellington var utan insikt om sin musikaliska storhet och okunnig om rasfrågan - är falska.

Ellington hade tidigt en klar uppfattning om sin särpräglade begåvning och storhet. Det stack han inte under stolen med i intervjuer och artiklar han skrev själv. Det framgår också att han var mycket rasmedveten.

Han såg sin musik som uttryck för sin ras storhet och han var stolt över att vara amerikansk neger.

Det finns en tankeväckande upplysning i en artikel skriven av Alice Babs, som samarbetade med Duke Ellington under 1960-talet till hans död. Ellington skulle till en radiointervju i New York. Han bad henne följa med honom till studion. "Dom behandlar mig bättre om du är med mig", förklarade han. Detta gäller alltså en av USA:s största musikaliska originalbegåvningar i vårt sekel och det hände efter en karriär som hade varat i 50 år.

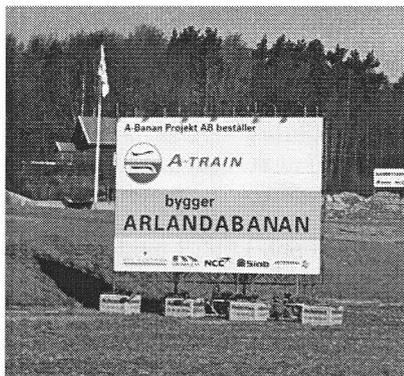
Detta står att läsa i programmet till "The Ellington '94 Conference" som ordnades i Stockholm 1994 av "The Duke Ellington Swedish Society" under ledning av Göran Wallén, Stockholm.

Villy Bergström

A TRAIN

Stockholm is getting its A-Train.

The Stockholm Community is building a new speedy railway connection between the Arlanda Airport and the City Center. Apparently it is going to be called "The A Train". So within a few years time the Stockholmers and visitors flying in to Stockholm may "Take The A Train" !



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