



George Avakian skriver för DESS



Foto: Ian P. Clifford

ELLINGTON ON COLUMBIA

By George Avakian

Tracing Duke's contracts is difficult. Early contracts are mostly lost, and it is not easy to penetrate the understandable veil of secrecy exercised by companies and artists' representatives. Fortunately I negotiated a number of his contracts during my years as a Columbia executive (1946-1958).

Certainly Duke was not signed to exclusive contracts during his earliest years. Through 1931, he switched labels in a manner which suggests that his recording rights were controlled entirely by his manager of the time (Irving Mills), who was also a booking agent and

who enjoyed a certain amount of flexibility in placing his artists on competing labels – sometimes not even bothering with pseudonyms.

Defining what is meant by "Columbia Records" is not easy. Because the Columbia and Brunswick labels were owned by the American Recording Corporation (ARC) between 1931 and their final separation in 1939, I believe that the linkage must be considered as having begun with Duke's recording session for Vocalion (a Brunswick subsidiary) on November 29, 1926.

fortsättning på sid 4



I årets första DESS-Bulletin skrev jag om vår satsning Duke's Place – jazzens nystart på Gyllene Cirkeln. Styrelsen hoppades att satsningen skulle vara rätt – och det blev en dundersuccé! Det var 175 betalande besökare varav 102 inte var medlemmar – 7 stycken blev medlemmar under kvällen. Musiken med Kjell Fernström, Swe-Dukes och Ulf Johansson Werre Trio var utmärkt och uppskattades av publiken. Eftersom ekonomin gick ihop så var alla inblandade, musiker, restaurangen och vi inom styrelsen för DESS, nöjda. Vi hoppas på samma publik tillströmning till Duke's Place på Gyllene cirkeln nästa gång – den 3 maj 2010. Ett skäl till att det kan bli succé även nästa gång är att vi fortsätter med högklassig musik av och med Sweet Jazz Trio och GGG - Gugges Gamla Gäng. Dessutom satsar vi på marknadsföring via media, via ABF, via musikernas hemsidor och via LTS.

Vad är LTS frågar Ni kanske? Det står för Ljudtekniska Sällskapet med drygt 760 medlemmar, intresserade av musik och rent ljud (undertecknad är medlem sedan 1974). LTS har utvecklat en serie högtalarbyggsatser, som rätt byggda resulterar i välljudande högtalare. Det är ju så att de två viktigaste delarna i en ljudåtergivningskedja är början och slutet! Slutet är förstås högtalarnas kvalitet medan början är kvaliteten på inspelningen, vilken skall göras utan "masteringtricks" dvs förändring av tonkurvor etc. efter det att inspelningen är gjord. Många moderna överföringar till media såsom vinylskiva och CD är förvrängda. En av mina favoriter, monoinspelningen av "Duke Ellington at Newport 1956", som gjordes av George Avakian, finns sedan 1980-talet i av andra inom CBS omgjorda vinyl- och CD-utgåvor "Digitally rechanneled for stereo". För oss Ellingtonvänner är detta en styggelse eftersom vi vill njuta av kvaliteten och känslan från originalinspelningen, som återger stämningen från den jublande och dansande publiken – föregångare till senare tiders pop- och rockkonserter.

I detta sammanhang gör LTS en stor insats genom att i skrift och föredrag försöka påverka musiker, inspelningsstudios och skivbolag om betydelsen av rent ljud. LTS ger ut tidningen Musik och LjudTeknik 4 gånger per år med recensioner av skivor och utrustning samt tekniskdiskussioner. Eftersom jag genom kontakter med medlemmar i Duke Ellington Society of Sweden vet att det finns många som är intresserade av HiFi-återgivning, så rekommenderar jag ett medlemskap i LTS genom att sätta in SEK 240:- på deras plusgirokontonummer 13 18 00-5.

Hur kommer LTS in i vår förenings marknadsföring? Jo, efter ett möte på LTS, där medlemmar och besökande fick spela "sin" musik (Leif Jönsson och jag var där och spelade bl.a. Ellingtonmusik), föreslog jag LTS styrelse ett samarbete rörande ömsesidig marknadsföring. Ett erbjudande kom raskt från redaktören om att DESS i nästa MoLT skulle få införa en halvsidesannons, vilket till slut blev en helsidesartikel om DESS, LTS, HiFi och Duke's Place. En medlem värvades under kvällen och kommer så lite som 1 % av LTS 760 medlemmar till Duke's Place den 3 maj så är det ju bra....

Vad gäller föreningens CD "Echoes of Duke in Stockholm" så är Bo Holmqvists texter i skrivande stund (före påsk) klara och layout och produktion återstår. CD:n kommer att bifogas DESS Bulletin nr 3 i höst. Eftersom jag har agerat intensivt för att DESS-CD:n skall produceras så känns det bra att vi nu kommer till ett resultat som både DESS styrelse och medlemmarna kommer att kunna vara stolta över.

För de medlemmar som saknat kåserier vid de senaste mötena så kommer styrelsen att försöka ordna detta i mindre format under hösten. Men för att finansiera detta så behöver vi både att nuvarande medlemmar betalar årsavgiften, att vi får fler nya medlemmar samt att medlemmarna stöder styrelsens satsning på klubbafatn med helaftonsmusik.

Så kom så många som möjligt den 3 maj till Duke's Place på Gyllene Cirkeln!
Till DESS

Jan Falk, ordförande

Porträttet av George Avakian på framsidan av detta nummer är taget av Ian P. Clifford, i samband med att Avakian erhöLL The 2010 NEA Jazz Masters award.



Vid vår första klubbafatn på nya "Duke's Place" spelade Swe-Dukes med bland andra Curt Andersson, Bosse Broberg, Ulf Lindsjö, Karin Hallin, Ulf Johansson Werre och Gus Dahlström.

DUKE'S PLACE en stor framgång när "Kringlan" väcktes ur dvalan

Det var på 60-talet det hände och tog slut. Gyllene Cirkeln öppnade dörrarna för ett inträde av 5:- kr den 7 april 1962, Bud Powell satt på pianostolen, den förste i en lång, lång rad av världsstjärnor. Fem år senare började stället komma på dekis, i varje fall ur jazzsynpunkt. En ny generation av unga svenska jazzmusiker hade kläckts eller börjat att kläckas under denna korta tid. Gyllene Cirkeln eller "Kringlan", som somliga sade kort och gott, hade gjort sitt som plantskola och jazzuniversitet liksom Nalen tidigare i en lamare form. Så går det förr eller senare för alla legendariska jazzklubbar världen över med namn som Montmartre i Köpenhamn, Blue Note i Paris eller Ronnie Scott's i London.

I dag är det Fasching som skall vårda både tradition och avant garde – en svår dubbel uppgift som sköts med den äran men som tyvärr inte får samma självklara uppbackning som kom Gyllene Cirkeln till del. Vad detta beror på är komplicerat att förklara: kan det bero på lokalens utformning, kan det bero på att den täta tobaksröken är borta, att inträdesavgiften mångdubblats, publiken förnygrats och krympt, att tidsandan förändrats, jazzen till nackdel...?

Svaret på alla dessa frågor ut i det blå har ingen – men så roligt dock att Ellingtonsällskapetets djärva steg från Döbelnsgatan till Sveavägen med lanserandet av Duke's Place på Gyllene Cirkeln's legendariska domäner blev så framgångsrikt, för att inte säga succéartat. (Exakt 48 år senare, sånär som på en månad, dvs den 8 mars 2010.) Vi har aldrig haft så mycket folk både ur medlemskåren och intresserade, och även om också solen hade sina fläckar kan man lugnt slå fast att detta måste återupprepas både en och flera gånger för att rättvist kunna utvärderas.



All framgång sitter naturligtvis inte enbart i namnet och arkitekturen och trots allt är det musiken som är viktigast för oss alla. Man blir inte bättre för att man andas mästarnas luft nästan 50 år senare. Det vore också orättvist att göra jämförelser av den arten och

Karl Olandersson

Kjell Fernström



i jazz är förresten ingen dag den andra lik och skall så inte vara. Därför skall heller inte Ulf Johansson Werre och hans piano jämföras med Bud Powells insats vid Cirkelpremiären. Ulf Johansson Werre var mer än bra nog, sin egen man både ensam vid pianot eller med den bråkiga trombonen i nypan. Som pianist är han rolig och mycket underhållande och gjorde sina delar av kvällen med intelligenta blinkningar åt det förflutna.

Först ut var emellertid till min förtjusning blåsarparet Claes Brodda (tenorsax/klarinet) och Karl Olandersson (trumpet), kvällens stjärnor enligt mig, sekunderade av kapellmästaren Kjell Fernström, den fine veteranen/basisten Arne Wilhelmsson och Jesper Kviberg, trummor..

Nu har jag svårt att variera lovordskonfekten för de båda blåsarna så ofta som jag har haft tillfälle att berömma dem. De gamla vitsorden om Broddas vackra tenorton och bredd i spelet gäller alltså liksom den återkommande häpnaden över Olanderssons bekymmersfria umgänge med sitt instrument – kanske borde jag efterlysa en mognad som gärna fick ta sig mer kompositoriska uttryck, med vilket menas längre, mer melodiosa solosatser. Och lite mindre pyroteknik.... Claes Brodda får som vanligt en släng av slevan för att han ännu inte hittat sin ideala ton i klarinetten. Ja, jag vet att den kommer.

Det är ett bra band som faktiskt flera gånger denna kväll gick in i det magiska tillstånd som kallas "swing", då tyngdlag och metronom sätts ur spel och rytmen frikopplas i en ny dimension. Rena trolleriet (om ni förstår vad jag menar).

Publiken var högljutt förtjust också i Swe-Dukes med Ellingtonkavalkad nr 2 som gav mycken valuta.. Men bandet hade inte sin bästa dag, det kräver repetitioner och bättre formulerade solister. Fast det tyckte inte publiken att döma av en snabbenkät vid utgången. Endast den gamle grinige undertecknade.

Förresten var helhetsintrycket av denna premiär på Duke's Place mycket positivt. Och var något mindre perfekt, rättas det till nästa gång.

text: Bo Holmqvist
foto: Jan Falk och Claes Brodda



ELLINGTON ON COLUMBIA

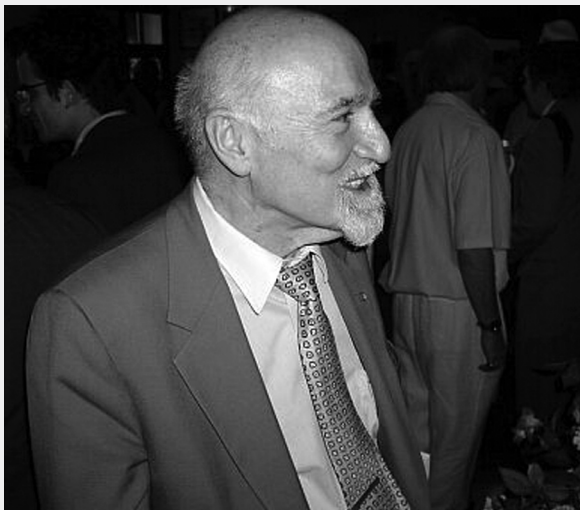
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The date is significant on several other levels as well. Earlier that month, Mills heard the Ellington band at a little club on West 49th Street and signed Duke to a management contract the very next day. The two sides released on Vocalion 1064 were the first recordings that clearly defined the Ellington sound, both compositionally and in the arrangements: East St. Louis Toodle-Oo and Birmingham Breakdown. The artist identification on the labels ("Duke Ellington and his Kentucky Club Orchestra") was also significant, because broadcasts from the club brought their music to the new and important radio audience.

After two more singles with Vocalion and two for the parent Brunswick label, Duke appeared on Columbia for one session (March 22, 1927) before returning the following month to Brunswick, apparently in continuation of Mills's freedom to move Duke easily from label to label.

Victor

By October 6, 1927, Ellington's record sales and broadcasts had evidently caught the attention of Victor,



Note: With the rise of acetate and tape recording in the late 1940s, the interspersing of numerous concert and broadcast releases in between actual recording sessions makes it difficult to follow Duke's career as a contracted recording artist even by linking the most helpful guides in tracking Duke's association with Columbia: Volume 1 of Brian Rust's "Jazz Records: 1897-1942" and Volume 6 of "Jazz Records: 1942-1980," edited by Ole J. Nielsen. I have assumed that most readers are familiar with the changes of ownership of various labels, such as Columbia to American Recording Corporation (ARC) to Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) to Sony Music. I have also scattered a few related observations, mostly from my own experience as a Columbia executive (1946-1958).

George Avakian

the largest American record company, which recorded four sessions with Duke, interrupted by the Okeh session that included Jabbo Smith's appearance on Black and Tan Fantasy. The Ellington orchestra's most significant move during this period came on December 4, 1927, when it began its tenure as the house band at the Cotton Club, which established it as a major musical force. The Victor session of December 19 also marked the first appearance of "Duke Ellington and his Cotton Club Orchestra" on a record label.

For the next four years, Duke's free-lance recording continued with a kaleidoscope of releases – many under pseudonyms - which are well documented in Rust.

On December 9, 1931, the American Recording Corporation acquired both Brunswick (from Brunswick-Balke-Collender, the leading manufacturer of billiard and pool tables) and Columbia (from the Columbia Gramophone Company) along with their subsidiaries. When ARC was bought by the Columbia Broadcasting System on January 1, 1939, CBS re-established Columbia as a major label, while continuing Brunswick and Vocalion until contracts for the rights to those names were allowed to expire.

At this point, Mills apparently decided that an exclusive Brunswick was best for Duke. Beginning with the landmark "It Don't Mean a Thing" session of February 2, 1932, he kept Duke on that label except for finishing up a commitment with Victor on February 3 and 9, until a year later when Duke made a session in New York for EMI (Electrical and Mechanical Industries of England, on February 16, 1933). Since EMI represented Brunswick in Europe at the time, it may well have been an amicable exception rather than a break in Duke's contractual flow at Brunswick. The next interruption was equally brief. While Duke was in England in July 1933, he did a session for Decca, a British label. (Jack Kapp, longtime director of pop recording at Brunswick in the U. S., started the American Decca label in late 1934.)

Mills had become one of the most powerful artist agents in the business. Even though he continued to place his artists most often with Brunswick and its subsidiaries, he returned Duke in September 1933 to Victor, the elite label of the time. This lasted for a year, until Duke came back to Brunswick with the wonderful "Solitude" / "Moon Glow" session under a new Brunswick contract dated September 1, 1934. Renewals followed regularly for the next five and a half years.

Master

During the last half of 1936, Mills decided to launch Master Records, which would headline Ellington, as a 75-cent label, with Variety as a 35-cent subsidiary. He brought in Helen Oakley (soon to be Mrs. Stanley Dance) as his principal recording director. Distribution in the United States was arranged through ARC, but Mills held out for full foreign distribution by EMI instead of just selected items. It was a rare miscalculation; no foreign labels agreed to release his product, so there was no foreign income. In July the Master label was dropped, followed by Variety in October, in favor of a return to the Brunswick and Vocalion labels.

On January 1, 1939 the Columbia Broadcasting Company bought ARC and its artist contracts. With the brilliant Edward (Ted) Wallerstein spirited away from Victor, CBS

revived the Columbia label in September, this time at 50 cents, much to the anguish of Victor, which remained at 75 cents. To add insult to injury, the new Columbia pop label was red, which Victor unsuccessfully claimed was an infringement of its copyrighted classical Red Seal label. None of these label changes broke the sequence Mills had started in 1932.

The Brunswick (and Vocalion) labels were soon phased out, because CBS, having embraced the Columbia name for recordings as well as broadcasting, chose to let the sales on those labels drop below the figure established in the 1931 ARC purchase from Brunswick-Balke-Collender as the annual minimum number of units sold in any given year as a requirement for retention of the rights to the Brunswick and Vocalion labels. Decca picked up the rights to the Brunswick and Vocalion names, though not the masters made since December 1931, which remained CBS-Columbia property. Columbia replaced Vocalion with OKeh as its 35-cent label.

Back to Victor

In early 1940 the biggest breaking-off in Duke's career took place when he split with Irving Mills, who had guided Duke from his early days at the Kentucky Club. Apparently Duke, for the first time, asked to see the books of Mills Music. His contracts with Mills were quietly terminated and Ellington immediately signed with Jack Robbins of Robbins Music as his new publisher and the William Morris Agency for management and booking. The Mills-Columbia contract was also cancelled and Duke returned on March 6, 1940 to Victor (now beginning to be known as RCA-Victor).

This was the start of the Webster-Blanton period, although both men had joined Duke a few months earlier. "Ko-Ko" and "Cottontail" led the way to a revival of Duke's fortunes. Even though the record industry was forced to reduce production drastically as war clouds loomed and the Japanese army invaded Malaysia in December 1941, cutting off 90% of the world supply of shellac – the most vital ingredient in the manufacture of 78-rpm discs – RCA kept Duke under contract until September 3, 1946.

Musicraft, a new specialty label, signed Ellington for a series of sessions between October and December 1946, but Duke was without a record contract until Columbia's California office signed him on July 30, 1947.

Duke, me and Columbia

I had first met Duke the day after I graduated from the Horace Mann School in June 1937, when a classmate's family invited me to a private concert at his parents' Westchester County country club. My first professional contact with him came in 1940 when I released the first Ellington album ever, as part of Columbia's Hot Jazz Classics (the industry's initial series of jazz reissues in the form of annotated 78-rpm albums). As with the first Louis Armstrong album, I included some previously unreleased masters that had lain forgotten in the company's vaults, which delighted Duke as much as it had Louis. A lifelong friendship developed with both my idols, even though I was drafted into the army in 1941 and saw them only once or twice thereafter until my return from the Pacific war in February 1946.

A month later Columbia Records invited me to not only

revive the Hot Jazz Classics reissue series, which I had worked on once a week during my last year and a half in college, but to join the pop A&R staff on a full-time basis. Columbia's re-signing of Duke in California raised my hopes that I might one day record him in the studio.

This finally happened on December 22, 1947 at Liederkrantz Hall on 58th Street, starting with the single of "On a Turquoise Cloud." Two days later, "The Liberian Suite" marked the first of several long Ellington works which I had the pleasure of producing, much to his joy but to the dismay of the salesmen, who always wanted to know, "When is Duke going to create his next 'I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart'?"

I continued recording Duke, whose contract was renewed for two years on July 30, 1950. By then I was no longer an untested member of the A&R staff. Mr. Wallerstein had put me in charge of a new department (Popular Albums) as well as the International department (which the war had rendered virtually dormant). The development of the long-playing record soon changed my life, as well as the nature of the recording industry. By 1951, LP had overtaken the pop single worldwide as the most profitable type of record release.

It was during this period that Columbia gave Duke the right to record for Mercer Records, a label named after his son, who had composed "Things Ain't What They Used to Be," one of the band's new theme songs. (The other, of course, was Billy Strayhorn's "Take the A Train.") This was an amicable arrangement which pleased Duke and represented no competition to Columbia, as Mercer Records had very modest public distribution. In fact, I even supervised a couple of these sessions for Duke (at no charge).

This arrangement led to an unexpected dividend. During an engagement at the Rainbow Ballroom in Fresno, Colorado, Duke had a local engineer make a recording of Louis Bellson's composition, "Skin Deep," intended for Mercer Records. (Duke and Mercer assured me the date was February 29, 1952 – it was in a "Leap Year" – which contradicts both Nielsen and the magnificent "New Desor" by Luciano Massagli and Giovanni Volonté.)

During appearances at a couple of sound-equipment shows in the mid-west, Duke arranged to have the unreleased recording used as a demonstration disc for new speakers. The reaction was wildly enthusiastic. Hearing the tape, months later in New York, inspired me to purchase it for inclusion in a new Columbia LP, stressing the term "Hi-Fi" in the album title.

The balance of that set (Columbia CL-830) was done at our 30th Street Studio in New York, actually a few days after Duke's two-year contract of 1950 had expired. Here is what happened:

Not long after Mitch Miller joined Columbia to run the pop singles department, he established a schedule of two releases a week. Sometimes I might add a third, such as by Duke, which was especially useful for air play as most disc jockeys were not yet featuring album tracks. Eventually Mitch protested that this distracted from the weekly "push" on his new singles. He particularly singled out Duke, who was always anxious to promote his recordings on the radio, at a time when disc jockeys were not playing many album tracks.

This conflict came to a boil while I was negotiating

ELLINGTON ON COLUMBIA

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a renewal of Duke's contract, just as we were poised to take advantage of his sudden popularity with high-fidelity equipment manufacturers. Neither Mitch nor Duke would budge on the singles issue, so I arranged to complete the "Hi-Fi Ellington Uptown" album under a short-term "date" contract. This still left some time open on the second side of the LP, which I filled with "Controversial Suite," left over from 1951, in part because the sales department never liked Duke's long compositions. The music fit the high-fidelity concept, and it also gave Duke and me a private chuckle, because of the timing of its release during the controversy over single-record releases.

Capitol

1953 arrived and disc jockeys had begun to play album tracks extensively, but this did change Duke's desire to have singles released. He remained without a contract until Capitol promised him full promotion including singles. To my dismay, the very first recording Duke made under his new Capitol contract was "Satin Doll" – exactly the kind of single the Columbia salespeople had been hoping he would do for the last several years!

I had had a similar experience with Toots Thielemans. In 1948, my brother Aram had become his friend in Brussels and Paris, and he persuaded me to sign Toots when he first came to America. Nothing happened in the first year of his contract, and I did not pick up the option. And when Toots signed with Verve, what was his first recording? You guessed it – "Valse Bluesette!" We have laughed about it all throughout our sixty-odd years of close friendship.

Duke's two-year contract with Capitol did not affect our long-standing personal relationship. As 1955 drew to a close, I spoke to Duke about two projects. Rosemary Clooney had wanted to make an album with Duke. She had a feeling for jazz, and I felt that her poignant interpretation of "Hey, There" indicated that she and Duke might be a good fit. Duke agreed, and said he'd even write a new work for the LP, which became the album title: "Blue Rose." Another date contract was signed for the project.

A colleague at Columbia at the time was Irving Townsend, whom I had met when Benny Goodman introduced us during his engagement at the 400 Restaurant on Madison Avenue in 1946. "You'll like him," said Benny. "He got out of the Navy just about the time you got out of the Army; he's a good clarinetist, too." Irv and I became good friends. He struggled for years as a free-lance writer, but succeeded mainly in collecting an impressive number of rejection slips from the very best magazines – Atlantic, New Yorker, Saturday Review, you name it. When an opening for a copywriter developed in the Columbia publicity department, I got Irv the job, and in the intervening years he became the advertising manager.

By 1955, my two departments – Pop Albums and International – had become the most profitable divisions of any American record company. The successes that Ted Wallerstein had brought with LP, and his successor

Jim Conkling with his faith in the ultimate power of popular albums and the concept of company-owned distributors, had not greatly changed the tight budgeting that Columbia had gotten used to when the company was lagging behind Victor and Decca in the mid-forties. I was working night and day with my two departments (and enjoying it, despite only nominal raises in salary each year despite their enormous growth) but the only way I could get more assistance was to arrange for Cal Lampley, a tape editor in the engineering department's night shift, to come into Pop Albums after I successfully recommended a replacement for him – none other than Teo Macero, who had impressed me with his musicianship while playing with Charles Mingus, who paid Teo the rare honor of performing his music alongside Mingus's own..

Meanwhile Townsend knew I needed still more help. He had been present at several of my sessions, and felt that he, too, could produce records if he had the opportunity. It was an idea I should have recognized myself. I invited Irv to come more often to the studio, and between us we found a replacement, just as I had with Lampley.

I decided that the Ellington-Clooney collaboration would be the best way to start Irv as a producer. Both artists, I assured him, were thorough professionals who were easy to work with. A snag developed in the early planning, but it also contributed to my conviction to give Irv the assignment. This was the fact that Rosie (as we all called Miss Clooney with great affection) was pregnant in Los Angeles, with no possibility of being able to travel, and Duke was coming to New York with no prospect of an early return to California. The solution was to send Irv and Billy Strayhorn to Los Angeles to work with Rosie in picking the songs and setting the keys. Duke



and Billy would then prepare the arrangements, which would be recorded in New York without the vocals, and Billy and Irv would return to Los Angeles to rehearse Rosie and supervise the overdubbing of her voice.

I explained the process to Irv while the backgrounds were being recorded at 30th Street, assuring him that it would be even easier than recording a vocalist in the usual way. Everything worked like a charm, and the album turned out well.

All this is background to the second idea I discussed with Duke in the winter of 1955-56. This was inspired by my having accepted an invitation a few months earlier from the New Orleans Jazz Club and Dr. Edmond Souchon (a banjo-plucking dentist and jazz enthusiast whose creation of a new set of false teeth – commissioned by Louis Armstrong - had made possible the comeback a few years earlier of the legendary trumpeter Bunk Johnson) to bring Turk Murphy's band from San Francisco to headline what would be the first New Orleans Jazz Festival.

At first I thought that this was like "bringing coal to Newcastle," but the Louisianans explained that the local music had degenerated into a kind of Middle Period Tourist Dixieland, whereas Murphy had come to symbolize The Real Thing. Doc Souchon had no budget for transporting Murphy's band all the way to New Orleans, but fortunately this took place at the time that Columbia's publicity director, Debbie Ishlon, was working with the Helena Rubinstein cosmetic company in the promotion of a new shade of lipstick.

Although Turk was only a small part of the promotion, Mme R. agreed to defray the cost of our bringing him to N. O. from S. F. in exchange for a credit in the album annotation. Columbia's principal beneficiary was Dave Brubeck, who agreed to make an album called "Jazz: Red Hot and Cool," which was the name of the new lipstick. I'm sure you've seen the album cover, with a languorous model, Suzy Parker, draped over Dave's piano. (Her lipstick still looks to me like just plain red.)

In New Orleans I thought of going for a two-LP set (the second LP would feature local musicians), but Doc Souchon was right - there was no "name strength" to speak of in the Crescent City at the time, so I settled for having the venerable trombonist Santo Pecora sit in with Murphy during a set to be recorded on board a riverboat. This almost failed when we discovered that the battery-driven electricity on board Captain Joe Streckfus's S. S. President ran down, giving a new but unwelcome meaning to the slide trombone. Fortunately Peck's gig at the Famous Door on Bourbon Street did not start until well after we returned to the pier, and the set was completed by plugging our equipment into a dockside outlet.

Newport 1956

Meanwhile Duke had made an agreement to do two LPs for Bethlehem Records in February 1956, but that did not stand in the way of the second idea I had for him. Having pulled off what has often been considered the first recording ever at a jazz festival (the 1952 Paris concerts starring Sidney Bechet and Charlie Parker were not billed a festival, but would have qualified), I decided to go for the grand prize – multi-LP set at Newport by

Columbia artists, including Duke Ellington premiering a special composition I would ask him to write for the occasion.

I had been on the advisory board of the Newport Jazz Festival from the start, and saw that it was in financial difficulty despite its well-publicized beginnings. Its main support came from Louis Lorillard, whose family's fortunes had begun in 1760 with the founding of the American Tobacco Company. Louis and his wife Elaine, who originated the idea of the festival, had engaged George Wein to produce it. The financial report at the last board meeting had been discouraging. Why not plan to record Columbia artists at Newport in 1956, and persuade the company to donate a substantial sum to the festival for the right to do so?

The first step was to persuade Columbia to come up with a figure. Goddard Lieberman, who had replaced Conkling as president at Columbia, approved a \$25,000 donation. The Lorillards were ecstatic; they recognized at once the long-range value of a set of Columbia recordings publicizing the Festival worldwide, adding "If we had enough money, we would pay Columbia to record it!" George Wein's initial reaction was "I wasn't going to invite Duke back for a third year if he's going to feature the medley of his old hits, but I'll book him if he really writes a new piece." I assured him that that was my priority also – I would absolutely need fresh repertoire from Duke, as well as everybody else.

The last step was to ask Duke if he could compose a new work in time, dedicated to the Festival – "Something we might call the Newport Jazz Festival Suite." Duke's response was, "Strays and I always have something we can cook up by then." He agreed to another date contract for Newport, and with that start I lined up Louis Armstrong, Dave Brubeck, J. J. Johnson and Kai Winding, Eddie Condon and a small group under Buck Clayton.

Then two days before I left for Newport, Lieberman urged at the end of a meeting with the sales department that I cancel the idea of recording at Newport in favor of calling in the artists to repeat their repertoire in the studio because of the risks of one-shot outdoor recording, particularly as the Festival had announced that there would be no refunds or postponements in case of rain.

"The payment to the Festival is still OK," he said, "but not the risk of unusable results." I pleaded that a far more likely result could be some inspired live performances. (Of course I had no idea that until minutes before the Ellington musicians went onstage that Duke had a surprise that would spark the band – the last-minute "Diminuendo and Crescendo In Blue.")

Only an impassioned plea by the sales manager, Hal Cook, saved the day. His main argument was not merely that I had worked hard to make this unique idea possible, or that we had announced our plans publicly, but that "this has never been done before - and we are Columbia; we do things that nobody has ever tried."

And oh yes, the first set (with Eddie Condon) was successfully recorded in a howling rainstorm during which the musicians never took off their raincoats, Eddie never opened his guitar case, and the piano top remained closed. (I put a mike under it).

The day before Duke was to arrive at Newport, he called

ELLINGTON ON COLUMBIA

forts. från föregående sida

me to say that because of the lack of rehearsal time there would almost surely be flaws in the performance of the Newport suite. Could I book a studio the Monday after Newport, in case anything needed to be re-recorded and patched into the live performance? I assured him we could, but what if somebody bought the recording and complained that he did not hear the wrong notes he had heard at the concert? Duke had a ready answer: "Just ask him if he would have been willing to buy a recording with mistakes in it!"

Well, you all know what really happened. Duke was so pleased by the way the engineers and I saved the day that the rest is history – including, unfortunately, the notorious annotation which appears in the Columbia 2-CD edition. It is packed with unbelievably transparent false statements from start to finish. My lawyer, who still represents the estates of Jimi Hendrix, John Lennon and Miles Davis, told me "Don't sue. You can't lose, but Phil Schaap has no money, and Sony is so complicit in publishing libelous statements that their own files disprove, that they will delay and file appeals forever, hoping that at your age" (79 at the time) "you will run out of money or drop dead, which ever comes first." Luckily, the Sony Music executives who permitted this to happen are no longer with the company, and so after all these many years, some time in 2010 the truth will eventually come forth.

Duke was so grateful that he accepted the three-year term contract of July 10, 1956 which I had prepared to replace the date contract – without a guarantee of single releases, which we both felt no longer mattered.

There was a bit of a flap during Townsend's recording of either "Drum Is a Woman" or "Such Sweet Thunder" – I wasn't present during those sessions, and I don't remember which, but it was probably the latter. A dispute arose between Irv and the engineers about how the stereo version was to be recorded for possible future use. (At that time, Ampex had given us an experimental stereo recorder, which was run simultaneously with the usual "A" and "B" monaural reels. Unfortunately, this unit was not available for Newport 1956.) When Duke found out that a stereo version of that session might never be possible, he asked me to come back and replace Irv as his producer.

I talked him out of it, not just to protect Irv, but because I knew that I was planning to leave Columbia very soon, and I did not want to leave Duke with an unresolved problem. Fortunately that blew over, and I resigned with a clear conscience on my 39th birthday on March 15, 1958. It was a convenient Friday, and also made a nice bracket with the day Mr. Wallerstein had hired me to start the Hot Jazz Classics – Washington's Birthday in 1940.

Such Sweet Thunder

Incidentally, I always regretted that I did not have time to produce "Thunder" myself. I would especially have enjoyed writing the story of its first performance. Some time in the falloff 1956, my wife (violinist Anahid Ajemian)

and I planned a series of four concerts to be presented at Town Hall in New York. Each program would present classical artists in the first half, and jazz artists in the second half, interpreting a particular aspect of music in their own medium. Her manager suggested an overall title of "Music for Moderns," and I decided to ask Duke to write a new 40-minute suite for the first program, to be performed opposite a performance of Kurt Weill's "Concerto for Violin and Wind Instruments," conducted by Dmitri Mitropoulos with Anahid as the soloist. (I still have the guest list chart for that concert. Miles Davis had G-6 and G-8 in the parterre.)

Soon after Duke accepted the commission, he called to say that he and Strayhorn would not be able to complete a new work in time. "We're still working on a suite for the Shakespeare Festival in Stratford, Ontario," he said. "Maybe they'd like to have the premier at Town Hall in New York. Call the director and ask him." He not only agreed, but he accepted my invitation to come to New York and speak before the work was performed.

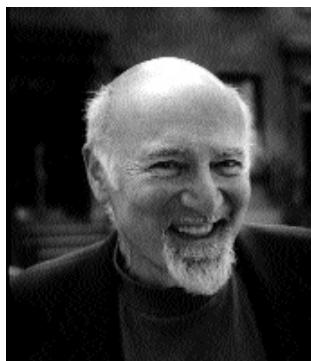
Duke knew that as an English Literature major at Yale, I was familiar with most of Shakespeare's plays. He asked me to come up with a title for the new suite.

"Easy!" I said. "The first line of 'Twelfth Night' is 'If music be the food of love, play on.' It's even spoken by a Duke named Orsino." "Too obvious," said Duke. "We should find something more subtle." I bought three copies of a cheap edition of the complete plays, and suggested that we divide the search among us. Duke covered the first 14 plays, Irv the next 14, and I took the remainder plus the sonnets and poems.

It was Duke who came up with "Such Sweet Thunder." They are the last words of a speech by Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, in the middle of Act 4, Scene 1 of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." When I looked it up, I understood at once why Duke had chosen it: "I never heard so musical a discord, such sweet thunder!"

After I left, Duke signed a new three-year contract on July 10, 1959. He continued with similar renewals until his relationship with Columbia came to an unexpected end. By then, Clive Davis was president of the company when he decided in October 1972 to cancel all contracts of Columbia jazz artists except for Miles Davis – something I was very familiar with, because I was Keith Jarrett's manager at the time. The company had just picked up his option for a second year, and we were in the midst of discussing a live recording of Keith's first unaccompanied piano concert, which I was about to produce at the Mercer Arts Center in Greenwich Village. Columbia paid Keith the minimum guarantee for the cancelled second year, and I worked out new contracts for him with Impulse and (for unaccompanied recordings) ECM, a new company just started by Manfred Eicher who came to the solo concert and liked what he heard. I made the concert recording myself, but Keith thought he could do better in the future, so it was never released.

Nevertheless, Manfred – who spoke almost no English at the time – signed Keith to a contract that I drew up in German with the help of my high school *Sprachlehre*buch.



The last time I saw Davis was a couple of years later. I greeted him with one word: "Kölnkonzert." He never spoke to me again.

Oh, I enjoyed that story so much I forgot about Duke and the end of his Columbia career. The singer Joni James was outside Davis's office when she overheard

the last conversation Duke had with him. "Duke, we're canceling your contract," Davis said. "You don't sell records." "Excuse me," Duke replied, "My job is to make records. Your job is to sell them."

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Vem är George Avakian?

George Avakian, i dag 91 år gammal, är en av de legendariska skivproducenterna med en lång karriär hos Columbia som en av deras mera framgångsrika producenter. Särskilt skall framhållas hans många album med Louis Armstrong och kanske framförallt att han bidrog starkt till Miles Davis popularitet genom flera av Davis i dag historiska album. Men han producerade även många av Duke Ellingtons lyckade album.

Första gången jag hörde talas om namnet Avakian var på 50-talet då han, vad man säger "splicat" några nummer med Armstrong. D.v.s. han hade skarvat numren med solon från olika tagningar. Detta väckte en livlig debatt i jazzkretsar.

George har ofta deltagit i Ellingtonkonferenser runt om i världen och bl.a. kunde vi höra honom vid konferensen i Stockholm 2004 då han berättade om sina tänkta planer för en gemensam LP med Armstrong och Ellington. En transkription av detta kåseri återgavs i en tidigare Bulletin.

George Avakian är mycket känslig för att jazzhistoriska detaljer presenteras korrekt för läsarna. I detta nummer av Bulletinen nämner han Columbias CD-utgåva av "Ellington at Newport" där det bilagda texthäftet innehåller många felaktigheter, enligt Georges mening.

När vi i DESS kontaktade George med en förfrågan om han med sin erfarenhet inom skivindustrin kunde tänka sig att skriva en artikel om Ellingtons relationer till alla de skivbolag han arbetat för, blev George eld och lågor. Han ansåg att det var ett underbart ämne för en artikel och åtog sig omedelbart att skriva den. Den artikel som nu presenteras i detta nummer av Bulletinen blev självklart mycket intressant. Vi inom DESS är stolta över att vara först i världen att publicera den.

George har delat upp artikeln i två delar, en som behandlar Ellingtons historiska skivproduktion och en som handlar om Georges egen tid som producent hos Columbia. George Avakians vittnesuppgifter är av stort intresse och DESS vill rikta ett stort tack till George för hans bidrag.

Bo Hausfman



The Duke i Borlänge 1963 (foto: Olle Lindholm)

Ellington i Borlänge

Under några år på 1990-talet var jag chefredaktör för Dalademokraten i Falun. Där fanns en äldre reporter, Tord Lönnqvist, som berättade intressant om Ellingtons konsert i Borlänge en vacker junikväll 1963. Den då unge Tord fick en lysande PR-idé. Han lät tidningen ordna en tävling om kunskaper i ämnet Ellingtons musik. En ung kvinna från Kvarnsveden vann.

Tord ringde turnéledaren och bad denna ordna ett sammanträffande med Ellington. Det gick bra, han fick komma bakom scenen en halv timme före konserten. Tord berättade för Duke om frågetävlingen och undrade om maestro kunde överlämna priset, en Ellington-LP. Duke frågade genast om tidningens namn och övade snabbt på att säga *Daalademokraaten*. Han bad att få namnet nedskrivet i "block letters".

När konserten - en utomhuskonsert - började, steg Duke ut på scenen och började: "There has been a contest organized by Daalademokraaten---" så bad han flickan komma upp på scenen. Han tog fram en stol och hon fick sitta på höger sida om orkestern hela föreställningen och börja med att önska en låt.

Det var Tords mästertliga PR för sin tidning och flickans "day of a lifetime". Duke var vänligheten själv. Senare försökte Tord samma sak igen med Count Basie vid ett Dalabesök, men Basie var tillknäppt och helt avvisande.

Villy Bergström

Quentin Jackson – “Monsieur Le Beurre”

By Roger Boyes

Quentin “Butter” Jackson was born on 13 January 1909 in Springfield, Ohio. He played violin and organ at church and in school, taking up the trombone quite late, at eighteen. He was taught by his brother-in-law Claude Jones, a member of McKinney’s Cotton Pickers. After spells with various bands, including the splendidly named Zack Whyte’s Chocolate Beau Brummels, he joined the Cotton Pickers in 1931, on Claude’s recommendation though primarily as a singer. Ed Cuffee took the trombone solos, but Quentin’s forthright singing follows Rew Stewart’s fine solo on *Do You Believe In Love At Sight?* Other Ellingtonians in this band were Hilton Jefferson, Billy Taylor and Prince Robinson. Don Redman, with whom Quentin spent the later 1930s, called him “Butter” because he was “kind of chubby”. Duke first called him “Monsieur Le Beurre” in France in 1950.

He spent most of the 1940s in the Cab Calloway Orchestra. When Cab was at New York’s Strand Theatre in 1943, Quentin would leave the job to sit in with the Ellington band at the Hurricane, where it was playing a long summer engagement. Sandy Williams was depping at the time for Lawrence Brown, who was in California,



awaiting the Army’s call (which never came). Quentin occupied Juan Tizol’s chair, the one he would eventually take over in 1948. He recalled that Tricky Sam Nanton would ask him: “When are you going to give me a break? When are you going to sit in my chair, man?” Quentin would respond: “It’ll never happen. I’ll never be able to grab that plunger.”

Quentin left Calloway in 1948, when Duke was about to set off for Europe, with Ray Nance and Kay Davis but without the band. Anticipating that he would need to recruit a new trombone player on his return, Ellington urged Quentin not to take a regular job with anyone. But Quentin needed the money. He joined Lucky

Millinder, who fired him after three weeks, saying he was a great trombone player and a gentleman, but just now what he was looking for at that time. It was the only time Quentin was ever fired. With the Cotton Pickers, Redman and Calloway, Quentin always sat with other eminent trombone players, and he appears to have been largely a section man. This would change after he joined Duke, and it was as a plunger specialist, the idea he had dismissed so emphatically in 1943, that Ellington would deploy him in the 1950s.

He joined Ellington in the autumn, with Wendell Marshall and Ben Webster, replacing Claude Jones in Juan Tizol’s old chair, the one he had occupied briefly in 1943 at the Hurricane. It was time for the second recording ban, but on surviving performances from Carnegie Hall and Cornell University he discharges Tizol’s former responsibilities on *Reminiscing In Tempo*. A photograph shows him in the section and playing valve trombone, in front of a horn player (Mercer Ellington?); Duke conducts, arms outstretched. In Tizol’s chair, with Tyree Glenn in Tricky’s on one side and Lawrence Brown on the other, Quentin stated melodies, but did not take other solos. This situation would change dramatically.

In 1950 the Ellington Orchestra went back to Europe. Glenn’s wife refused to let him go because of a French girl with whom Tyree had had a liaison when he was in Paris with Don Redman in 1946 (Quentin had also been in Paris with this band). In Europe Quentin started to take the plunger solos. Ted Kelly took over the open chair, but went home after two weeks to get married. When Lawrence Brown fell sick in Italy, Quentin was suddenly shouldering his solo responsibilities too, and also covering all three trombone parts: “I was playing Lawrence’s solos, playing Tricky Sam’s chair, and I would take whatever part I thought would fit... in different spots”. In Paris he recorded with a Hodges group, taking two blues choruses (open horn) on *Rendez-Vous At The Hot Club* and *Bean Bag Boogie*. From late in the year comes an early plunger outing, on *Great Times* (Columbia).

In 1951 Sonny Greer, Lawrence Brown and Johnny Hodges defected. The outcome for the trombones was dramatic. Britt Woodman replaced Brown, Tizol returned to his old chair, and Quentin switched permanently to the Tricky/Tyree third chair with its plunger responsibilities. The 1950s section was essentially in place, and Quentin’s brief time in 1943 sitting in with Tricky now paid dividends as his career as a plunger specialist began. As a section the 1950s team of Jackson, Tizol (later John Sanders) and Woodman bore comparison with the classic line-up of Nanton, Tizol and Brown.

Quentin plays open horn, tailgate style, in *Before My Time (Controversial Suite, 1951)*, in the opening trio with Baker and Procope and in a solo chorus. He is heard again in this “dixieland” vein on the 1953 Capitol *Basin Street Blues*. On *Britt-And-Butter Blues* (Coronets) he takes the first trombone solo (plunger), and on *Deep Night*

he takes the plunger solo on a piece which essentially introduces the “new” trombone section in their several roles. Opinions differ as to whether Quentin or Britt Woodman took over Brown’s old slot on *How High The Moon*, from 1951 until the piece was dropped in the mid-50s. (New DSEOR has Quentin as soloist, whereas Alun Morgan in the notes for Jazz Unlimited JUCD-2036 has Britt).

As Tricky’s successor Quentin was the natural 1950s choice for such early classics as *Rockin’ In Rhythm* and *Ring Dem Bells*, and 1940s scores like *Main Stem*, *Jack The Bear* and *Ko-Ko*, in the which André Hodeir so loathed. He also took over Tyree Glenn’s role on *H’ya Sue*. He solos on numerous “string-of-solos” blues features – *C-Jam Blues*, *Jam With Sam*, *Festival Junction*, *Uncontrived* from a 1956 “stockpile” session, and very memorably on *Discontended Blues* from the sour final Capitol sextet date in 1955, when he also solos on *Oh! Lady Be Good* and *Once In A Blue Mood*. He plays against beautifully scored clarinets on *I Can’t Give You Anything But Love* (Capitol, 1953), and his solo dominates the second half of Billy’s wonderful score of *My Funny Valentine* (Bethlehem, 1956).

Quentin assumed his earlier Tizol role for 1954 remakes of *Bakiff* and *Caravan*. Some say that the trombone solos on these recordings are by John Sanders, who by now had joined the band. But Kurt Dietrich, the expert on Ellington trombone issues, says that Jackson “continued to play many of Tizol’s melodic solos” for some time after Sanders joined, and John himself agrees. He was introduced to the valve trombone in the Ellington Orchestra, by Tizol, in May 1955.

All this gives a decidedly “retro” feel to Quentin’s career as an Ellington soloist, but for *Such Sweet Thunder* Duke produced *Sonnet For Sister Kate*, a brief (little more than a single chorus) portrait of the two sides, termagant and subdued, of Katharina’s personality. A little later came the mock-solemn *Donkey Serenade* from the unjustly neglected *Bal Masque* LP and the stately *Red Carpet* from *Toot Suite*. With the much earlier *The Mooche*, these are some of Ellington’s best showcases for Quentin’s skills with the plunger, though his most important responsibility was another revival, the 1958 recreation of Tricky Sam’s crucial part in *Work Song* from *Black, Brown And Beige*. There is fine Jackson too on the 1959 Hodges-Strayhorn septet album *Cue For Saxophone*.

Many of Quentin’s solos quickly became “fixed” routines. *Red Carpet* is one that did not. His *Jazz Party* and *Jazz At The Plaza* readings are quite different, the former being one of the finest solos he ever recorded. A most versatile band member, he was a competent bass player, subbing several times for Jimmy Woode. One interesting occasion was the *Festival Session* for Columbia in 1959. Jimmy failed to arrive for the start of the session, and Quentin took over on bass on *Dual Fuel*, with Clark Terry playing his trombone part on fluegelhorn (six trumpeters were present on the date). Joe Benjamin subbed on bass for the first part of *Idiom ’59*, and Jimmy finally arrived in time to play on parts two and three.

Quentin’s musical recall was highly developed. He knew all Tricky’s solos, and Lawrence Brown’s. According to

Britt Woodman, he could play all Cootie’s solos. When Duke forgot one of his own piano introductions Quentin sat at the keyboard and played it for him. He could also drive the bus if required.

At the end of the 1959 European tour Quentin left Duke with Clark Terry to join Quincy Jones in a show touring the Continent. Next he replaced Al Grey in the Count Basie band, which led to a reunion with the Ellingtonians on the 1961 *Battle Royal* summit encounter. He solos on three of the eight titles. *BDB* largely spotlights the piano players, but Quentin and Lawrence Brown each take a chorus. *To You* is short feature, for Quentin alone, by Thad Jones, for whom he would work in a few years’ time. On the wonderful *Segue In C* he follows Louis Blackburn in the solos sequence, so that we can listen successively to two very different exponents of the art of growl trombone.

I said that Quentin Jackson was “in one way the most remarkable Ellingtonian of all”. His achievement in Italy in 1950 is one reason, but the real one came in 1962. By now Quentin was with Charlie Mingus. On *The Black Saint And The Sinner Lady* he was what is arguably his crowning achievement, a wonderful extended solo excursion in the second movement, *Duet Solo Dancers*. Is there any other Ellingtonian whose experience stretches from McKinney’s Cotton Pickers to the work many judge to be Mingus’s masterpiece?

In later years Quentin worked with various big bands, including Louie Bellson, Gerald Wilson and Thad Jones-Mel Lewis, and with the Copacabana house band and Sammy Davis Jr. Quentin Jackson died of a heart attack in 1976 while playing in *Guys And Dolls* on Broadway.

Roger Boyes is the editor of *Blue Light*, the newsletter of DESUK – Duke Ellington Society (UK).

Jazz Humour

Bob Wilber once told the following story about Johnny Hodges:

After an Ellington concert, an elderly woman went back stage to talk to Johnny Hodges about his beautiful and passionate solo on *Day Dream*. The woman asked Johnny, “What were you thinking of? What thoughts were going through your head as you played that beautiful song?” Of course, a likely answer would be thoughts of a beautiful woman, but Hodges replied, “I was counting the house and checking the exits.”

Duke Ellington and Dr. Arthur C. Logan

A Devoted Friendship That Began at the Cotton Club in 1937

By Fred Glueckstein

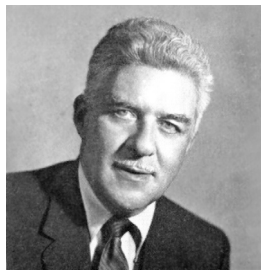
Följande artikel, publicerad för en tid sedan i TDES (New York) news letter, är författad av Fred Glueckstein, vars artikel om Ivie Anderson vi tidigare återgivit i Bulletinen.

The surprise 60th birthday party for Dr. Arthur C. Logan (in photo), the renowned physician and leading civil rights activist, was the idea of his wife Marian. Her first telephone call was to Duke Ellington. He gladly accepted the invitation to come and play with members of his orchestra at the birthday celebration on September 8, 1969, at the couples' duplex on West 88th Street in Manhattan.

Duke Ellington was Arthur Logan's closest friend and patient. Their friendship began some thirty-two years earlier when the two men met in 1937 at the Cotton Club. At that time, Arthur Logan, son of the treasurer of Tuskegee Institute, was a physician. He had studied at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons and was one of the first black graduates of the school.

In the years that followed, Duke became Arthur's patient, and the two men became close friends. Logan helped Ellington deal with the pain left by the death of his parents. As his doctor and friend, Arthur was always there for Duke. In later years, Arthur's wife Marian would describe her husband's friendship with Ellington as one that was unique, incredible, and unexplainable. Arthur never missed a recording session and would sit and watch with Marian until all hours of the night.

Arthur always came to Duke's side even if called when his friend was on tour. Duke called Arthur from every city where he and the orchestra performed to ask comically, "How do I feel?"



As time went on, Arthur Logan became one of the most important and influential men in New York. He was a civil rights leader in the National Urban League; a member of the board of the New York City and Hospitals Corporation; director of New York City's Haryou-Act, a forerunner of national poverty programs; and the founding member of the Upper Manhattan Medical Group. In addition to Logan's being Ellington's doctor, he was also the physician to the Rev. Martin Luther King, baseball great Jackie Robinson, Billy Strayhorn, and many others.

In 1969, a special White House celebration of Duke's seventieth birthday was held. President Richard Nixon told Ellington and guests that "In the royalty of American music, no man swings more or stands higher than the Duke." The president also presented Ellington with the Presidential Medal of Freedom which is the country's highest civilian Medal of Honor. Arthur Logan, Duke's longtime friend and physician, was among the politicians, musicians, and invited guests at the celebration.

Duke learned in the spring of 1972 that he had incurable lung cancer. He and Arthur agreed to keep the illness a secret as Ellington continued his busy performance schedule. While in London in 1973, Duke learned that Arthur had died suddenly in a fall from a bridge over the West Side Highway in Manhattan.

The news of Arthur's death crushed Ellington. It came at a time when he had already lost two of his closest associates to death, Billy Strayhorn in 1967 and Johnny Hodges in 1970. Arthur was one of the greatest losses Duke had to sustain because he was an indispensable part of his life. On the phone with Logan's wife, Marian, after hearing of his friend's death, Duke said to her, "I won't get over this. I won't last six months."

Duke Ellington died at 3:10 AM on Friday May 24, 1974. It was almost exactly six months after Arthur Logan died and the period of time he predicted to Marian Logan.

Nya medlemmar

DESS hälsar följande nya medlemmar välkomna i vår illustra förening:

Kim Altsund, Västra Frölunda
Gunilla Bergström, Stockholm
Margita Dahlström, Johanneshov
Birgitta Gilljam, Stockholm
Tore Grimhall, Upplands Väsby
Mary-Ann Hovland, Bromma
Saida Källqvist, Hägersten
Barbro Matsson, Solna
Nalle Nilsson, Stockholm
Peter Preisler, Ekerö
Christian Schoeps, Tyresö

DESS behöver fler medlemmar. Inspirera
Dina vänner och bekanta att också vara med!



Mercer Records

- projektet som inte blev vad man hoppats på

Duke Ellington var en fantastisk kompositör och orkesterledare, något som vi alla är överens om. Men han var också en ganska effektiv affärsman. Redan i sin tidiga ungdom i Washington etablerade han sig tidigt som affischmålare och i gamla telefonkataloger från början av 1920-talet har man hittat annonser för "The Ellington Serenaders", där han alltså marknadsförde sin första orkester. Senare när han var etablerad som orkesterledare och kompositör bildade han sitt eget musikförlag, Tempo Music Inc. och under den senare delen av sin karriär var hans värde på marknaden så pass högt så han behövde inte knyta upp sig med något grammofonbolag utan kunde spela in där han fick bäst betalt. Han gjorde även försök att starta grammofonbolag men här var han inte lika lyckosam, kanske berodde det delvis på att hans åtaganden som orkesterledare tog allt för mycket tid i anspråk, vilket gick ut över engagemanget som skivbolagsdirektör.

Duke Ellingtons första försök i skivbolagsbranschen var ett skivmärke med namnet **Sunrise** som han startade tillsammans med sin livmedikus Alfred Logan och en tidigare anställd hos Decca vid namn Mayo Williams. (Namnet Mayo Williams ingår i den amerikanska grammofonindustrins historia. Han var grundaren av en av de första "race-etiketterna"; den sällsynta och idag högt värderade etiketten **Black Patti**.)

Man startade verksamheten 1947 och gav ut ett fåtal skivor i Johnny Hodges, Al Hibblers och Billy Strayhorns namn, men mycket mer blev det inte och projektet lades snart ner.

Men 1950 gjorde Ellington ett nytt och allvarigare försök genom att starta skivbolaget **Mercer Records**. De som praktiskt skulle sköta företaget var Leonard Feather och Dukes son Mercer Ellington, vars förnamn alltså fick utgöra bolagets namn. Billy Strayhorn lär också ha haft en mindre andel i företaget. Tanken var säkert från början att Ellingtons orkester skulle vara det stora säljande namnet för bolaget men Duke vågade inte ta den stora utmaningen utan ansåg sig tvingad att vara knuten till ett bolag med större inflytande på marknaden och ingick därför ett kontrakt med Columbia. George Avakian berör denna frågeställning i sin artikel.

Feather och Mercer Ellington kämpade dock vidare och hade som målsättning att ge ut fyra skivor per månad. Självklart var det musiker ur Ellingtons orkester som kom att nyttjas och inledningsvis koncentrerade man sig på inspelningar med Oscar Pettiford och Al Hibbler. En inspelning av "White Christmas" med Al Hibbler blev en ekonomiskt lyckad utgåva. Oscar Pettiford ingick vid denna tid i Ellingtons kader av musiker men hade

råkat ut för en olycka och brutit en arm vilket hindrade honom att spela bas. Under sin konvalescens började han experimentera med cello och de första inspelningarna med detta instrument gjordes för Mercer Records.

Billy Strayhorn fanns ofta med vid inspelningar för Mercer Records, och särskilt pianoduetterna med Duke Ellington har gått till eftervärlden. Därutöver medverkade Duke själv vid inspelningar och noterbart är de inspelningar som gavs ut under orkesternamnet "The Coronets". På många inspelningar för Mercer Records hittar man namn som kan sägas vara non-Ellingtonians som t.ex. Red Rodney, Max Roach, Jo Jones, Benny Carter, Dave Barbour, Sara Forde med flera.

Att marknadsföra och distribuera skivor från ett litet bolag hade sina svårigheter. Många stora affärskedjor ville endast sälja skivor från leverantörer som kunde tillhandahålla garanterade storsäljare tillsammans med mera svårsålt material. Mercer Records utbud bedömdes i de flesta fall som svårsålt. Dessutom ansågs skivorna inte hålla någon materiellt hög standard, då den shellack som användes var av låg kvalitet.

Man gjorde en affärsuppställning med engelska Vogue och franska Jazz Selection som gav ut flera Mercersinspelningar på sina etiketter i Europa och några av dem kom även ut på svenska Jazz Selection. I gengäld gav Mercer Records på sin etikett ut ett antal franska inspelningar. Den kanske avgörande orsaken till Mercer Records svårigheter på marknaden kanske ändå var det faktum att 78-varvsskivan hade börjat se slutet på sin existens. 45- och 33 1/3-varv började ta över, och bolaget gav faktiskt ut några 10-tums LP med material som tidigare givits ut på 78-varv.

I slutet av 1950 bestämde sig Leonard Feather för att lämna Mercer Records. Mercer Ellington var inte heller nöjd med samarbetet med sin far Duke, vilken enligt sonen ville bestämma för mycket över företagets policy. Efter ett års verksamhet sig bestämde parterna för att lägga ner Mercer Records. Duke gjorde aldrig något mer försök att etablera sig i skivbolagsbranschen.

I boken *Duke Ellington In Person - An Intimate Memoir by Mercer Ellington* ägnas några sidor åt nämnda skivbolag och utgör en intressant läsning.

Här följer en diskografisk uppställning över de inspelningar som gjordes på skivmärket Mercer Records:

Johnny Hodges And His Orchestra

Taft Jordan (tp); Lawrence Brown (tb); Johnny Hodges (as); Al Sears (ts); Billy Strayhorn (p); Oscar Pettiford (b); Wilbur De Paris (dr)

New York, June ? 1947

1013 Who Struck John?	Mercer LP-1000
1014 It Shouldn't Happen To A Dream	Mercer 1951
1015 June's Jumpin'	Mercer 1961
1016 Violet Blue	Mercer 1961

fortsättning på nästa uppslag



Mercer Records

(forts. från föregående sida)

Johnny Hodges And His Orchestra

Harold Baker (tp); Johnny Hodges (as); Al Sears (ts);
Harry Carney (bars); Billy Strayhorn (p);
Oscar Pettiford (b); Sonny Greer (dr)

New York, late 1947
2032 Searsy's Blues Mercer 1970
2033 A Little Taste Mercer 1951
2034 Let The Zoomers Drool Mercer 1970
2035 Charlotte Russe Unissued. Released on
Jazz Selection 645

Chubby Kemp with the Billy Strayhorn-Johnny Hodges Sextet.

Johnny Hodges (as); Jimmy Hamilton (ts); Harry Carney
(bars); Billy Strayhorn (p); Wendell Marshall (b);
Sonny Greer (d); Chubby Kemp (voc)

New York Feb 11, 1950
4000 Hello Little Boy Mercer 1950
4001 The Greatest There Is Mercer 1950
4002 Don't You Know I Care Unissued
4003 I Got It Bad Unissued

Johnny Hodges & His Orchestra

Harold Baker (tp); Quentin Jackson (tb); Johnny Hodges
(as); Jimmy Hamilton (cl); Raymond Fol (p);
Wendell Marshall (b); Butch Ballard (dr)

Paris, April 20, 1950
3067 Wishing And Waiting Mercer 1957

Johnny Hodges & His Orchestra.

Harold Baker (tp); Johnny Hodges (as); Quentin
Jackson (tb.); Raymond Fol (p);
Wendell Marshall (b); Butch Ballard (dr)

Paris, June 20, 1950
4015 Perdido Mercer 1972
4017 Mood Indigo Mercer 1971
4018 Sweet Lorraine Mercer Lp-1006
4019 Bean-Bag Boogie Mercer 1957
4020 Hop, Skip And Jump Mercer LP-1006

Oscar Pettiford, His Cello & Quartet.

Duke Ellington (p); Billy Strayhorn (celeste), Oscar
Pettiford (cello), Lloyd Trotman (b); Jo Jones (dr)

New York Sep 13, 1950
4004 Untitled Blues Unissued but said to
appear on
some Mercer 1952 by
mistake.
Released on
Up-To-Date LP 2006
4005 Perdido Mercer 1952
4006 Take The "A" Train Mercer 1959
4007 Oscalypso Mercer 1952
4008 Blues For Blanton Mercer 1959
4009 Twelve O'Clock Jump Unissued

Chubby Kemp & Her All Stars/The Ellingtonians with Chubby Kemp.

Red Rodney (tp); Johnny Hodges (as); Harry Carney
(bars); Duke Ellington (p); Oscar Pettiford (cello); Wendell
Marshall (b); Max roach (dr); Billy Strayhorn
replaces Ellington on "How Blue Can You Get".

New York, Sep 21, 1950
4010 Mean Old Choo Choo Unissued
Released on
Up-To-Date LP 2006
4011 White Christmas Mercer 1953 (The Elling-
tonians with Al Hibbler)
4012 Nobody Knows The
Trouble I've Seen Mercer 1953 (The Elling-
tonians with Al Hibbler)
4013 Me And My Wig Mercer 1971
4014 How Blue Can You Get Mercer 1960
4015 Juke Bop Boogie Mercer 1971

Sara Forde with Mercer Ellington & His Orchestra.

New York, Sep 21, 1950
4016 Set 'Em Up Mercer 1960

The Ellingtonians.

Oscar Pettiford deleted
New York, Sep 21, 1950
4017 The New Piano Roll Blues Mercer 1958

Sara Forde with Billy Strayhorn at the Piano.

New York, Sep 21, 1950
4018 The Man I Love Mercer 1958

Jimmy McPhail with Billy Strayhorn Trio.

Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn (p); Unknown (cl);
Wendell Marshall (b); Jimmy McPhail (voc)
New York, Oct 3, 1950
5707 I'll Remember April Unissued
5708 No Smoking Unissued
5709 Brown Suede Unissued

Billy Strayhorn Trio

Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn (p);
Wendell Marshall (b)
New York, Oct 3, 1950
5710 Cotton Tail Mercer LP-1001
5711 The "C" Jam Blues Mercer 1954
5712 Flamingo Mercer 1954
5713 Bang-Up Blues Mercer LP-1001

The Ellingtonians with Al Hibbler

Mercer Ellington (flh); Benny Carter (as); Harry Carney
(bars); Duke Ellington (p); Dave Barbour (g)
Wendell Marshall (b); Charlie Smith (d); Al Hibbler (vc)
New York, Oct 21, 1950
(According to Jepsen
recordings may have
been done in Los
Angeles)
4019 Stormy Weather Mercer 1956
4020 Cherry Mercer 1956
4021 Star Dust Mercer 1965
4022 Honeysuckle Rose Mercer 1965

Wild Bill Davis And His Real Gone Organ.

Duke Ellington (p); Wild Bill Davis (org); Johnny Collins (g); Jo Jones (dr)

New York, Oct ?, 1950

4023 Things Ain't What
They Used To Be

Mercer 1955

4024 Make No Mistake

Mercer 1955 (Ellington
not taking part)

Billy Strayhorn Trio

Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn (p); Joe Shulman (b)

New York, Nov?, 1950

2479 Tonk

Mercer 1963

2480 Johnny Come Lately

Mercer 1963

2481 In A Blue Summer Garden

Mercer LP-1001

2482 Great Times

Mercer LP-1001

The Coronets

Cat Anderson (tp); Juan Tizol (tb); Willie Smith (as); Paul Gonsalves (ts); Billy Strayhorn (p);

Wendell Marshall (b); Louie Bellson (dr)

New York, Apr 17, 1951

4029 Night Walk (Cat Walk)

Mercer 1969

4030 Moonlight Fiesta

Mercer 1967

4030 Moonlight Fiesta

Mercer LP-1005
(alt. take)

4031 She (Sensous)

Mercer 1967

4032 The Happening

Mercer 1969

The Coronets

Britt Woodman, Quentin Jackson, Juan Tizol (tb);

Willie Smith (as); Duke Ellington (p);

Wendell Marshall (b); Louie Bellson (dr)

Boston, May 18, 1951

4033 Swamp Drum

Mercer LP-1005

4034 Sultry Serenade

Mercer LP-1005

4035 Indian Summer

Mercer 1968 (Billy
Strayhorn instead
of Ellington)

4036 Britt-And-Butter Blues

Mercer LP-1005

The Coronets

Juan Tizol (tb); Willie Smith (as); Duke Ellington (p);

Billy Strayhorn (org); Wendell Marshall (b); Louie

Bellson (dr); Norma Oldham (voc)

New York, June 1, 1951

4037 The Nearness Of You

Unissued

4038 More Than You Know

Unissued

4039 Caravan

Mercer 1968

(Norma Oldham

deleted)

Billy Strayhorn & His All Stars

Juan Tizol (tb); Willie Smith (as); Jimmy Hamilton (cl);

Billy Strayhorn (p); Wendell Marshall (b);

Louie Bellson (dr)

New York, June 19, 1951

4040 Alternate

Mercer LP-1005

4041 Hoppin' John

Mercer 1973

4042 Jumpin With

Symphony Sid

Mercer 1973

Al Hibbler & His Orchestra

Juan Tizol (tb); Willie Smith (as); Jimmy Hamilton (ts,

cl.); Billy Strayhorn (p); Wendell Marshall (b);

Louie Bellson (dr); Al Hibbler (voc)

New York, July 19, 1951.

Trees

Mercer LP-1004

Summertime

Mercer LP-1004

Old Man River

Mercer LP-1004

On A Slow Boat To China

Mercer LP-1004

Som anförts i den inledande texten , bildades Mercer Records under 1950. Trots det förekommer inspelningar gjorda redan 1947. Enda plausibla förklaringen författaren kan finna till detta är att inspelningarna ursprungligen gjordes för Sunrise och att de togs över av Mercer Records i samband med etableringen.



Bo Haufman

New books a'comin'

Böcker om Duke Ellington kommer regelbundet ut på marknaden.

Under Ellingtonkonferensen i London 2009 framträdde författaren Harvey G. Cohen och berättade om sin förestående bok "Duke Ellington's America". Han fick åhörarna att verkligen se fram emot publiceringen, och i dagarna har den utgivits. I nästa nummer av Bulletin kommer vi förhoppningsvis att kunna recensera boken.

De större bokhandlarna i Sverige kommer troligen att marknadsföra boken men den som vill ha ett tidigt

exemplar beställer den enklast via www.amazon.com. Min beställning kostade \$34:38 inklusive frakt.

En annan amerikansk författare vid namn Terry Teach-out har nyligen givit ut en bok om Louis Armstrong som fått mycket gott mottagande i USA. Det är ett verk på hela 475 sidor. I samband med en intervju om verket nämnde Teachout att han tecknat ett kontrakt med ett bokförlag om att skriva en liknande biografi om Duke Ellington. Den beräknas bli publicerad om fyra till fem år. Enligt intervjuaren kan vi vänta oss något alldeles extra om den biografien håller samma klass som den nyligen publicerade om Louis Armstrong. Vilka stora nyheter kommer då att uppenbaras för oss?

Bo Haufman

Jerry Valburn in memoriam

Jerry Valburn har gått ur tiden. För oss Ellingtonsammlare var han ett legendariskt namn. Han var till professionen ljudingenjör och var anställd hos Columbia. Tack vare sina kontakter inom det bolaget fick vi tidigt tillgång till många okända Columbiainspelningar med Ellington och framför allt många okända tagningar. Jerrys främsta intresse inom jazzen kretsade till största delen kring Duke Ellington, och därigenom etablerade han tidigt en kontakt med Benny Åslund. Vid Bennys besök i USA presenterade Jerry honom för Duke Ellington.

Jerry Valburn hade en enorm samling 78-varvsskivor med Ellington, varav många var rariteter. Hela denna samling finns numera hos amerikanska Library of Congress där den utgör en grund för forskningen kring Ellington.

I början av 80-talet började Jerry Valburn ge ut LP-skivor på en uppsjö olika etiketter. Vi Ellingtonsammlare fick nöjet att lyssna på okända tagningar som kom ut på etiketterna *Merritt*, *Everybody's*, *Up-To-Date* och inte minst

den långa serien med *The Treasury Shows (DETS)*, som omfattade inte mindre än 49 LP-skivor och som nu håller på att återutges i CD-form av Storyville.

Han gav också ut viss litteratur av diskografisk karaktär kring Duke Ellington och särskilt skall nämnas hans *Directory of Duke Ellington's Recordings*, som är till stor hjälp för en Ellingtonsammlare.

När det gäller de återkommande Ellingtonkonferenserna, var Jerry en av initiativtagarna till dessa. Den första hölls i början av 80-talet för en liten begränsad grupp entusiaster, hemma i hans villa utanför New York. Senare växte konferenserna ut, och Jerry var en ofta förekommande föredragshållare.

I samband med Jerry Valburns bortgång har det på nätet cirkulerat en del nedsättande uppfattningar om hans affärsmetoder. Affärsrelationer kan ofta bli ansträngda och utgöra orsak till kontroverser, men för oss vanliga skivsammlare är namnet Jerry Valburn förknippat med beundran och tacksamhet.

Bo Hauffman

Alice Babs – Swing it!

Äntligen har den kommit på DVD, den utsökta filmen om Alice Babs! Alltså den som Sveriges Television visade för drygt ett och ett halvt år sedan och som då hette "Naturröstens Hemlighet". Men nu har producenten Lasse Zackrisson döpt om den till **Alice Babs – Swing it!**, vilket kanske låter litet mindre kryptiskt.

Här får vi höra – och se – fru Sjöblom själv berätta om sitt fantastiska liv, om sin tid som en "fara för Sveriges ungdom", om epoken Swe-Danes och om åren med Duke Ellington. Plus åtskilligt annat förstås. Och som grädde på moset får vi beskåda massor av filmat material, utlånat av olika film- och TV-bolag och framletat ur privata arkiv, inte minst Alices eget. Det hela naturligtvis för oss musikälskare, rena julaften.

Riktigt allt på *Alice Babs – Swing it!* handlar förstås inte om den jazziga delen av Alices brokiga karriär – men det allra mesta, eftersom just jazzen alltid har legat närmast hennes hjärta. Men mångsidigheten och det faktum att Alice, precis som hennes vän Duke Ellington, alltid har struntat i etiketter och genrer tycks uppenbarligen ha retat en del genom åren. Inte minst jazzkritiker. Att hon sjöng så kallade schlaggers och elizabethanska kärlekssånger, till exempel, har alltså uppenbarligen "stört" somliga. De kan förstås bero på att de inte har hängt med i svängarna. Eller också handlar det om någon slags snobbighet. Sådant förekommer kan jag lova!

Duke Ellington skriver i sina memoarer, *Music Is My Mistress*, att Alice Babs "is probably the most unique artist I know". Fast Duke kanske inte begrep lika bra som "experterna" vad han talade om. En annan gigant i branschen, kompositören och arrangören Ernie Wilkins, sa en gång till mig att "Alice är den bästa jazzsångerska jag någonsin hört" – och han hade ju hört några stycken.

Alice Babs – Swing it! är kort sagt en alldeles utomordentlig se- och hörvärd dokumentation av en av vårt lands allra största och mest lysande stjärnor genom tiderna. Dessutom ingår en text-CD med illustrerad diskografi,

som täcker Alice Babs omfattande skivproduktion 1939-2002. Jag skulle till och med vilja kalla det hela en svensk kulturskatt.

Jan Olsson



Denna DVD inhandlas lämpligast genom ett mejl till lasse.zackrisson@telia.com

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