



Duke Ellington Society of Sweden

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Betty Roché

Duke's unforgettable
vocalist

I detta nummer
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Sommar med vokalister

I denna Bulletin har vår Redaktör valt att spegla Betty Rochés karriär. Artikeln inleds med några uppfattningar av hur man kan kategorisera en jazzsångerska. Detta föranleder mig att komma med några kompletterande synpunkter. I artikeln sägs att en jazzsångerska är en sångerska, som framför sin text på ett improviserat sätt, som kan liknas vid vad en jazzmusiker gör när han spelar ett solo. Det kan man väl i princip hålla med om. Ella Fitzgerald, speciellt under senare delen av sin karriär, Anita O'Day och Annie Ross är några exempel på denna typ av jazzsångerskor. Ella Fitzgerald utvecklade sin improvisationsteknik till det yttersta. Vi har ju sett flera filmsnuttar där hon tillsammans med Duke Ellingtons orkester gör stor musik av nummer som *Cotton Tail* och *C-Jam Blues*. Fler exempel på denna typ av sångerskor finns. Men

vad skall man då säga om Billie Holiday? Hon höll sig alltid exakt till texten när hon framförde ett nummer men ändå blev det jazz av högsta kvalitet. När hon sjunger *Yesterday*, håller hon sig nogsamt till texten, gör inga improvisationer i den och ändå blir det jazz på högsta nivå. Svårt att förklara. Peggy Lee höll sig också som regel noga till texten, men hon hade en fin rytmkänsla och låg alltid en aning efter i takten, vilket gjorde henne till den säregna artist hon var. Den här skillnaden mellan "vokalist" och "jazzsångerska" kan säkert utvecklas mycket mer. Finns någon bland våra läsare som vill fördjupa sig i ämnet?

Arrangörerna av nästa Ellingtonkonferens, som skall äga rum i Washington, DC., i mars nästa år har äntligen kommit med litet information, som kan läsas på annan plats i denna Bulletin. Konferen-

sen sträcker sig över hela fem dagar, en ovanligt lång tid, så man får anta att den blir synnerligen innehållsrik.

Nu tänker jag njuta av sommaren i mitt sommarviste i Skåne. Men jag har mycket musik med mig. Inte minst Göran Axelssons samlade *Smoke Rings* program. Kanske skall jag dessutom lyssna på en del vokalister. Det borgar för en fin sommar oavsett hur vädret blir.

Nästa gång vi ses är den 16 september då vi skall få njuta av Peter Asplunds välljudande trumpet. Ni är alla hjärtligt välkomna då.



Leif Jönsson, ordförande i DESS

120 år med Duke Ellington

Vårens sista möte med Ellingtonentusiaster bjöd på en årskavalkad med Ellingtonfakta och dito musik samt en avslutande jazzkonsert med JazzMaTazz.

Håkan Skytt, humoristen, språksnitaren, estradören och pedagogen bjöd på sin Ellingtonuppfattning i ord och ton. Personligt och spännande. Hans musikexempel var naturligtvis omsorgsfullt valda, både de som hade spelats under Ellingtons levnad, men även de som spelades efter ikonens bortgång. Under föredragets gång passade Håkan på att kommentera vissa avsnitt i melodivalen med personliga synpunkter, vilket noterades med glädje och stor förnöjelse av under-teknad m.fl..

Vi fick följa Ellingtons musikaliska karriär genom kända och ofta spelade kompositioner med kommentarer till dåtid och nutid: *Black and Tan Fantasy*, *Black Beauty*, *Saratoga Swing*, *I en röd liten stuga*,



Jack the Bear, *All Too Soon*, *Pitter Panther Patter*, *The Hawk Talks*, *U.M.M.G.*, *Blood Count*, *Portrait of Sidney Bechet* samt *Lotus Blossom*.

Det skall här med eftertryck påpekas att samtliga DESS-sammanträden sedan en tid tillbaka har filmats och i övrigt kommenterats på föreningens hemsida www.Ellington.se, som på ett fantastiskt sätt administreras av vår föreningsmedlem Ulf Lundin. Så och detta senaste sammanträde. Vi uppmanar därför samtliga Ellingtonvänner att logga in på detta innehållsrika "Ellington-bibliotek" – alltid och oftare!

Kvällens levande musikaliska inslag levererades av Stockholmsorkestern Jazz-



Håkan Skytt.



JazzMaTazz.

MaTazz under ledning av Anders Lindgren på piano. Orkestern bestod vidare av Gustav Rosén, altsax, Mårten Korkman, bas, André Borgström, trummor, och Ulrika Goliats, sång. Thomas Pettersson, gitarr, var denna gång förhindrad att delta. *It Don't Mean A Thing* inledde pro-

grammet i ett tempo över medel med intressant basintro. *Don't Get Around...* med ett sublimalt spel på melodin av Gustav och med Ulrikas lagom "spräckta" röst. *I I can't Give You Anything...* levererade Ulrika trevlig scatsång med intelligenta svarssignaler från Gustav. *All Too Soon,*

Drop Me Off At Harlem och *Isn't Love The Strangest Thing* följde därefter. Låtarna interfolierades med diverse frågor från Anders om låtarnas upphovsmän och andra närliggande detaljer. Tävlingsen om de rätta svaren utspelades mellan Bossarna Hauffman och Scherman och slutade antagligen med oavgjort.

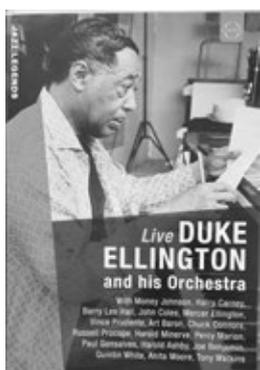
Get Yourself A New Broom, med intensivt spel av Gustav, följt av *Delta Bound* samt *Fine And Dandy* spelades i snabb takt. 16 takters *Take The "A" Train* inledde *I'm Checkin Out, Goo'm Bye...* som vi tyvärr inte får höra så ofta, med en studsande samspelthet, som också kännetecknade hela konserten. *Let's Fall In Love* och *I Never Felt This Way Before*, med en inklämmande texthantering av Ulrika och kul kommentarer av Gustav på saxen övergick till de avslutande numren *Just Friends* och *I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart*.

En uppskattad, svängig och lättillgänglig musikavdelning som fick avsluta vårsäsongen!

Thomas Harne

Ny DVD med Duke Ellington och hans orkester

En ny DVD-skiva med material från Bryssel den 16 november 1973 har dykt upp från Tyskland. Det rör sig om en videoundersökning, en av de absolut sista som finns dokumenterade med Duke. Denna skiva har en utmärkt bildkvalitet, medan repertoaren inte på något sätt avviker från det gängse mönstret från det årets turné.



I det medföljande korta texthäftet nämns följande titlar: *Opening*, *C-Jam Blues*, *Take The "A" Train*, *Creole Love Call*, *Caravan*, *New York, New York*, *Blem*, *Chinoiserie*, *Medley*, *Somebody Cares*, *Encore*.

Dessutom verkar producenten ha

missat att mellan *Caravan* och *New York, New York* spelas *In Duplicate* och efter *Chinoiserie*, men före *Medley* spelas *Mercuria*, *The Lion*.

Anita Moore lanseras i tre nummer, varav ett tillsammans med Tony Watkins. Kanske är avslutningen (*Encore*) det intressantaste med föreställningen, ty här får vi se och höra i tur och ordning Raymond Fol, Claude Bolling och Duke Ellington spela var sitt pianosolo på *Take The "A" Train*. Som nämnts är detta en av de sista TV-upptagningar som finns med Duke och hans orkester och man tvingas konstatera att Duke förefaller att inte vara vid bästa hälsa. Detta var ju bara 6 månader innan han avled.

Denna DVD är utgiven av EuroArts med nummer 2064938 och kan enklast införskaffas via hemsidan <https://www.euroarts.com/labels/6493-jazz-legends-duke-ellington-and-his-orchestra>.

Anders Asplund

New book a'coming

Still a new book dealing with Duke Ellington is on its way to the market. The author is Jack Chambers, a former professor of the University of Toronto, Canada. Those of us who attended the Ellington Conference in Birmingham last year could listen to his interesting speech about an unknown composition by Ellington, viz. *Celebration*. See Bulletin 3/2018.

Chambers' book "Black and Tan Fantasies" invites the readers to explore the music of Duke Ellington by pursuing nine themes that recur in his music. The themes have been pieced together selectively from Ellington's voluminous output and show how he developed them, picking and choosing images, ideas and predilections that intrigued him.

The intention is to have the book available on Amazon in July. DESS has contributed to the publishing costs with a symbolic sum of money.

Bo Hauffman

Betty Roché

Duke's unforgettable vocalist

By Bo Haufman

There are very few areas where Duke Ellington has received criticism. One of them is his choice of male vocalists. But when it came to his choice of female vocalists no such criticism exists. He engaged many good female vocalists such as Ivie Anderson, Joya Sherrill, Kay Davis, Dolores Parker, Marie Ellington and many more. They were all good singers and they delivered their lyrics in a very competent and personal way. There are numerous records where we can enjoy their artistry. But without criticizing them they were not what we today would call jazz singers. There were hardly any improvisations or scat singing in their performances. By the early 1940s more modern singers started to appear. Singers that wanted to express themselves in the same way as the instrumentalists. Into Ellington's band came modern vocalists like Betty Roché, Chubby Kemp and later on Lil Greenwood and Anita Moore. Betty Roché was the first of them, but unfortunately it seems as she is a bit forgotten and neglected today.

Duke Ellington devoted a short chapter to her in his autobiography *Music Is My Mistress* and he had the following to say about her: *Betty Roché was an unforgettable singer. She came with us during our Hurricane engagement in 1943, and she sang almost anything that was suggested or requested. She learned new songs so quickly, and they always came off as Betty Roché originals. She had a soul inflection in a bop state of intrigue, and it was presented to the listener in a most believable manner as by a little girl with an adult delivery. The recordings she did with us are still considered great, and they still have the luster of originality. Many of the phrases she came up with, along with the words she added, would have been considered good as instrumental licks. Her treatment of "Take The "A" Train", for example,*



is as classic as the original Ray Nance trumpet solo. She was the first to sing "The Blues" in "Black, Brown And Beige" (at Carnegie Hall in January, 1943), and every word was understandable despite the sophisticated hip and jive connections. She was thirty years ahead of her time. She never imitated anybody, and she never sounded like anybody but Betty Roché.

Betty Roché was born on January 9, 1920, in Wilmington, DE, as Mary Elizabeth Roach, and was raised by her grandparents in Atlantic City, NJ. Like Ella Fitzgerald, and many other stars, she began her career by winning an

amateur contest at the Apollo Theatre in Harlem in 1939. She was noticed by Al Cooper and joined his Savoy Sultans and remained with them until 1942. She made a recording with the Savoy Sultans on December 29, 1941. After her time with Al Cooper she had short stints with Hot Lips Page and Lester Young but no recordings with them exist.

Joining Duke Ellington

In the meantime Duke Ellington had problems with his female vocalists. Ivie Anderson, his longtime vocalist, had announced her wish to terminate her en-

gagement. Apparently because of health problems. Betty Roché was engaged by Ellington in August 1942 and was joined by two other singers, Joya Sherrill and Phyllis Smiley. However, the young Joya Sherrill had to go back to school and Phyllis Smiley also decided to leave. Betty was consequently left as the sole female singer and had to take over most of Ivie Anderson's numbers, such as *Hayfoot Strawfoot*, *I Got It Bad* and *Rocks In My Bed* to name a few, and she handled them without problems. Bob Thiele in an article described Betty Roché with the following words: *Betty has a very definite feeling for the blues and her voice is strong enough to take her out of the Harlem jump singer category.*

Barry Ulanov, in his Duke Ellington biography, describes Betty Roché as follows: *Betty had sung with the Savoy Sultans and other little outfits. She'd gigged around, played all kinds of spots and was a trained blues singer with something of the manner of Billie Holiday. She bent notes and carried measures along in cadenced groups much like the magnificent Billie. In addition, she had her own specialties, an infectious Body and Soul, with her own added lyrics at up tempo, lots of blues.*

It may be interesting to note that the recording she made with Al Cooper and his Savoy Sultans was a tune named *At's In There*. While Duke Ellington appeared at the Hurricane Restaurant in September 1943, Betty sang that song on a radio broadcast and it has recently been issued on DETS Vol. 25. It should also be observed that it was not until she started with Duke Ellington that she got the stage name Betty Roché. It was Ellington who proposed this more selling name rather than the more common Roach. There exists a photo (shown on page 7) taken by the photographer Gordon Parks at Hurricane Restaurant in April 1943, and according to Parks, Betty is performing *Salt Lake City Blues*.

Barry Ulanov further states: *Duke wrote a salacious set of blues choruses for her, I Love My Lovin' Lover, which Betty sold with delicious gesture and rowdy shout. It was all about taking her man to his wife's front door and his wife turning out to be as big as Joe Louis. Betty was still new when the band hit New York in the winter of 1942*

and Ellington fans crowded the bandstand at a one-nighter in the Royal Windsor Ballroom in uptown Manhattan to dig her.

Barry Ulanov wrote his Ellington biography already in 1946, but there exists no recordings of *I Love My Lovin' Lover* until 1952. One version, recorded at the same time as *Take The "A" Train*, was included in the Columbia LP "The World of Duke Ellington – Vol. 3" and a second take can be found on Up-to-Date 2004. Consequently it seems that the melody was performed already during Betty's first engagement with the band, but no such recording exists. In the 1960s the song became a feature for Lil Greenwood.



Reveille With Beverly

Shortly after Betty's start with Duke Ellington and his Orchestra they all went to Los Angeles where they would participate in two films. One of them was *Cabin In The Sky*, but Betty is not taking part in any of the band's performances in this MGM film. However, on October 8, 1942, they are in a Columbia studio to record for the film *Reveille With Beverly*. The star in the film is Ann Miller, who plays a young girl who manages to become responsible for a radio program and converts it to a more modern show catering to young people and especially military servicemen. Some of the most popular bands and artists of the day appeared in the film, like The Mills Brot-

hers, Count Basie, Bob Crosby, Frank Sinatra and Freddie Slack in addition to Duke Ellington and his Orchestra. Ellington's recording of *Take The "A" Train* had become very popular and Columbia had the Orchestra appearing in what seems to be a railway wagon playing their new theme song. The music was recorded beforehand and the musicians are miming. Betty sings the lyrics and Ray Nance makes an improvised dance routine.

It was very unfortunate for both Duke Ellington and Betty that the recording ban took place during her engagement with Ellington. During her stay with the band no commercial recordings were made for RCA Victor to which company Ellington was contracted. However, during this period several radio broadcasts were made from various locations, mainly from The Hurricane Restaurant, and several of them were parts of the Treasury Broadcasts, which have all been reissued, initially on LP by Jerry Valburn and later by Storyville on CD. On several of these we can hear Betty singing. Despite the recording ban it was in order for orchestras to record for various Transcription systems. One of them was World Broadcasting System, for which Duke Ellington and his Orchestra made several recordings. On November 9, 1943, Betty can be heard singing three numbers; *I Wonder Why*, *Go Away Blues* and *I Don't Want Anybody At All*. All of these recordings have been released on Circle LPs and on the sleeve notes Eddie Lambert says: *that the three takes emphasise the skills and professionalism of the very gifted Betty Roché.*

At Carnegie Hall

As mentioned by Duke Ellington in his *MiMM*, Betty Roché took part in Ellington's first Carnegie Hall Concert on January 23, 1943, where she sang *The Blues*, a part of *Black, Brown and Beige*. Leonard Feather had the following to say about her performance: *Betty sang her heart out that night – plaintively, evocatively, dramatically. It was a high point in her career as well as in Ellington's own. None of the many girl singers who tried to follow Betty in that role with Duke's band could achieve the degree of expressive intensity she*



Harry Carney, Betty and Rex Stewart

achieved on that long-remembered night in Carnegie Hall.

When it came to recording the suite commercially for RCA Victor, which was done on December 11, 1944, Betty had left the orchestra and *The Blues* was therefore entrusted to Joya Sherrill. The Carnegie Hall Concert was recorded but not released on the market until 40 years later.

Leaving and rejoining Duke

In the mid 1940s new ideas within jazz began to appear. They were later to be named Be-Bop. Betty had a feeling for these new ideas and regularly visited Minton's Playhouse where the modernists used to meet and try out their new ideas. She often sat in with them but in the end it was Sarah Vaughan who became the Be-Bop queen. Betty left the Ellington band in March 1944 to join Earl Hines and his Orchestra. It is possible that she found the music practiced by the Ellington Orchestra a bit too conservative and lacking modernism. Earl Hines had recently started a new band that adopted the new ideas and a lot of modernists were employed by him. Probably she found such environment more challenging and decided to leave Ellington. She made a few recordings with Earl Hines, but didn't remain with the band for more than a year.

There may also be another reason for Betty's leaving. In an interview Sonny Greer stated that Betty Roché was angered by the addition of the singer Wini Johnson. Johnson being a very attractive young woman but, according to Greer, her voice was no match for her looks. Betty could sing all of Ivie's stuff and I don't know what Duke was thinking when he brought that girl on, Greer said.

After her stint with Hines, Betty returned to Atlantic City, the town where she grew up. She joined the Quintaires, an instrumental and vocal group lead by the guitarist Bill Jennings. In this band Betty both played drums and sang. The next few years brought no big breaks. A short spell with the Jeter-Pillars band ended with a close down of the band. It seems that she relocated to California where she worked with Charles Brown and made some recordings with various local bands during 1945 including Benny Carter and Gerald Wilson.

After these recordings it is difficult to trace her further career. She married but the marriage didn't work out. It seems like she was on a long trip to nowhere, until one night in Sacramento, Ellington called her from San Francisco and asked her to rejoin him for a couple of concerts. The reunion lasted for about a year. On December 21, 1951, Ellington commenced a three week engagement at Blue Note in Chicago and Betty was with him, but just for the duration, it appears.



Betty and Duke.

After Ellington's exit from the Blue Note, there is no trace of her for the next two months.

On March 21, 1952, Duke Ellington and his Orchestra launched a tour across the US and now Betty is back with them, and she will stay with the band until January 9, 1953. During this period Betty can be heard from several concerts, dance dates and radio broadcasts. Many of them have been issued on various bootleg labels such as Skata 502, Stardust 201, Jazz Up 2036 and Up-To-Date 2004.

Take The "A" Train

During her second turn with the Duke Ellington Orchestra she is taking part in only one commercial recording session and that is when her most famous recording, *Take The "A" Train*, was recorded on June 30, 1952, for Columbia and released on their *Ellington Uptown* LP. In the sleeve notes George Avakian says: *Duke's new setting of Take The "A" Train is not the well-remembered original, but one that blends elements of that classic with new ideas in an ever-interesting recreation. The vocal, by Betty Roché, serves as a reminder that the bop influence has been more than passing, too.*

When the record was re-released in CD-format the inset had some additions by Patricia Willard saying: *Betty Roché injects her delightfully offbeat personality, se-*

rious musicality and sense of humor into lyrics she claimed were her own. Certainly, the scattling is. Her words resemble but depart from Strayhorn's, published in his copyrighted 1941 sheet music. More fun, actually.

Eddie Lambert in his *A Listener's Guide* had the following comments about Betty Roché: *On the evidence of her recordings with Ellington, Roché was a good singer with unusually secure pitching, who sometimes spoiled her work with an exaggerated manner of phrasing. She had two spells with the band. The first came during the first AFM ban; at the time, some journalists insisted that the Ellington discography was much the poorer for the absence of examples of her art. This assertion is not wholly borne out by the subsequent issue of transcriptions and air shots on which she sings, but this may be due to the poor material she was given most of the time. Her interpretation of The Blues in the premiere performance of Black, Brown and Beige is of a quality not to be discerned on her other records. Her second spell with the band was for some fifteen months in the early fifties. The few recordings she made then are excellent, although their virtues are those of standard jazz vocals rather than interpretations of Ellington's music.*



Career after Ellington

Betty's future career remained erratic and difficult to follow at least for this writer. However, in April 1956 she records an album for Bethlehem Records where she is accompanied by amongst others Conte Candoli and Eddie Costa. The album is properly named "Take the "A" Train" and she sings this melody plus a few other standards including some Ellington compositions.



Betty Roché at The Hurricane Restaurant. Photo by Gordon Parks.

In 1956 Bethlehem also issued an extensive album of George Gershwin's *Porgy And Bess*. Betty is singing a beautiful version of *Summertime*. Duke Ellington and his Orchestra are also supposed to take part in this album but it is difficult to tell where they appear. It is possible that the band was included in the Bethlehem Orchestra conducted by Russ Garcia. The discographies give no clear advice in this matter.

After these recordings we find no traces of Betty Roché, but it is believed that she was working in California. However, in 1960 she is back east and happens to meet her old acquaintance from Atlantic City, Bill Jennings. Jennings had a relation with Prestige Records and introduced Betty to them. This eventually results in two albums issued by Prestige. They are both recorded at Rudy van Gelder's studio in Englewood Cliffs, NJ. On the first album titled *Singin' & Swingin'* she is accompanied by Bill Jennings plus a competent group consisting of Jimmy Forrest, Brother Jack McDuff, Wendell Marshall and Roy Haynes. The repertoire consists of recognized standards but no Ellington compositions.

A year later she is back in the same studio to record again for Prestige. She is accompanied by a quartet headed by

the pianist Jimmy Neely and the album is released as *Lightly and Politely* and contains a number of standards including Ellington's *Rocks In My Bed*, *Just Squeeze Me* and *I Got It Bad*.

According to the sleeve notes of *Lightly and Politely*, written by Joe Goldberg, she once again performed in Carnegie Hall: *Quite recently, something occurred which might well be the cause of a final, and much delayed, breakthrough for Betty. Indirectly, Ellington was again responsible. The occasion was an Ellington Alumni Concert in Carnegie Hall on May 7, 1961. Everyone in the group, with the exception of pianist Jimmy Jones, had been with Ellington, and Betty was the featured vocalist. Inspired by the reunion with several old friends, for whom she has unbounded admiration, Betty had one of her greatest afternoons. She sang seven songs, one of them Take The "A" Train, and was definitely the hit of the concert.*

Not much more is to be found in the literature about Betty Roché. Although she worked sporadically in clubs, she seemed to be half-hearted about her career, and eventually slipped into obscurity a few years later. She passed away on February 16, 1999.

Betty may be forgotten today, but she ought to be unforgettable.

The discography of Betty Roché outside of the Ellington organization

Al Cooper's Savoy Sultans

Pat Jenkins, Sam Massenberg tp., Al Cooper, Rudy Williams, George Kelly reeds, Cyril Haynes p., Paul Chapman g., Grachan Moncur b., Alex Mitchell dr., Betty Roché voc.

New York, December 29, 1941.
70113-A *At's In There* Decca 8615

Jack McVea/Bailey Incorporated

Cappy Oliver tp., Buster Bailey cl., Jack McVea ts., Ram Ramirez p., Frank Clarke b., Robert Tarrant dr., Betty Roché voc.

San Francisco, uncertain date 1944.
RM502 *Rainy Day Blues* Rhythm 502/509

Earl Hines Sextet

Ray Nance tp, vln., Johnny Hodges as., Flip Phillips ts., Earl Hines p., Al Casey g., Oscar Pettiford b., Sidney Catlett dr., Betty Roché voc.

New York, April 26, 1944.
R1006 *Blues On My Weary Mind* Apollo 358
R1007 *I Love My Lovin' Lover* Apollo 356
R1008 *Trouble Trouble* Apollo 357
R1009 *Design For Jivin'* Apollo 357
R1010 *I'll Get By* Apollo 358

Earl Hines and his Orchestra

Willie Cook, Billy Douglas, Fats Palmer, Arthur Walker tp., Bennie Green, Dickie Harris, Cliff Smalls, Pappy Smith tb., Scoops Carey cl. as., Lloyd Smith as., Wardell Gray, Kermit Scott ts., John Williams bars., Bill Thompson vib., Earl Hines p., René Hall g., Gene Thomas b., David Booth dr., Betty Roché voc.

Hollywood, October, 1944.
Go Away Blues Jubilee 105

Benny Carter and his Orchestra

Irv Lewis, Fred Trainer, Gerald Wilson, Emmett Berry, Paul Cohen tp., Henry Coker, Alton Moore, George Washington, Louis Taylor tb., Barney Bigard cl., Benny Carter, Jewell Grant, Porter Kilbert as., Bump Meyers, Harold Clark

ts., John Taylor bars., Rufus Webster p., Herman Mitchell g., Charlie Drayton b., Max Roach dr., Betty Roché voc.

Los Angeles, March 26, 1945.
Trouble Trouble Black Jack 3003 (LP)

Gerald Wilson & Orchestra

Gerald Wilson, Emmett Berry, Hobart Dotson, Fred Trainer, Snooky Young tp., Vic Dickenson, Bob Sanchez, Melba Liston, Isaac Livingstone, Alton Moore tb., Floyd Turnham as, Vernon Slater, Olif West, James Henderson ts., Charles Waller bars., Jimmy Bunn p., Bill Edwards g., Ed Hale b., Henry Green dr., Betty Roché voc.

Los Angeles, May 21, 1945.
GW-128-3 *Just Give Me A Man* Exelcior GW128/126

Dave Matthews and his V-Disc Night Owls & Jammers

Al Killian tp., Lou McGarity tb., Ray de Geer as., Dave Matthews ts., Bob Dawes bars., Marty Napoleon p., Hy White g., Al Hall b., Jimmy Crawford dr., Betty Roché voc.

New York, September, 1945.
VP1579 *Trouble Trouble* V-Disc 595-A
Body And Soul Unissued

Tony Papa and his Orchestra

John Carroll, Vern Cressler, John Hunt, Alan Kiger, Clark Terry tp., Juan Tizol v-tb., Buddy Baker, David Baker, Quentin Jackson, Britt Woodman tb., Jimmy Hamilton cl., Gene Hull, Russell Procope as., Paul Gonsalves, Jerry Coker ts., Ray Papai bars., Marty Rose p., Rock Crandall b., Tony Papa dr., Betty Roché voc.

Chicago, December, 1952.
Love You Madly Unissued
Mercer recording

Betty Roché

Accompanied by Conte Candoli tp., Eddie Costa vib., Donn Trenner p.,

Whitey Mitchell b., Davey Williams dr.

New York, April, 1956.
Take The "A" Train
September In The Rain
In A Mellowtone
Time After Time
Something To Live For
Summertime
Just Got The Message
Route 66
All Too Soon
You Don't Love Me No More
All My Life
Go Away Blues
Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man

All issued on Bethlehem 20-30142 (CD)

Betty Roché

Accompanied by Jimmy Forrest ts., Brother Jack McDuff org., Bill Jennings g., Wendell Marshall b., Roy Haynes dr.

Englewood Cliffs, June 3, 1960.
2284 *When I Fall In Love*
2285 *September Song*
2286 *A Foggy Day*
2287 *Day By Day*
2288 *Come Rain Or Come Shine*
2289 *Blue Moon*
2290 *Where Or When*
2291 *Until The Real Thing Comes Along*
2292 *Billie's Bounce*

All issued on Prestige PRLP7187

Betty Roché

Accompanied by Jimmy Neely p., Wally Richardson g., Michel Mulia b., Rudy Lawless dr.

Englewood Cliffs, January 24, 1961.
2833 *Just Squeeze Me*
2834 *For All We Know*
2835 *Rocks In My Bed*
2836 *Maybe You'll Be There*
2837 *I Had The Craziest Dream*
2838 *Polka Dots And Moonbeams*
2839 *Jim*
2840 *Why Shouldn't I*
2841 *I Got It Bad*
2842 *Someone To Watch Over Me*

All issued on Prestige PRLP7198

Rocks In My Bed

By Mike Zirpolo

By late May 1941, the Ellington band had returned to Los Angeles after a spring-time tour of Pacific coast dance halls, a swing through the South and Midwest, and a short rest stop in Manhattan earlier in May. It appears that in early February, Ellington and Strayhorn attended a Hollywood party at the home of MGM gag writer Sid Kuller, and were invited to another similar party the next week with anyone from the Ellington band who chose to come. Several Ellington sidemen, including Harry Carney and Sonny Greer, accompanied Ellington and Strayhorn to that party. As was usually the case when Duke attended a party, eventually he was coaxed to the piano, after which the party went into high-gear. Among those present were actors John Garfield, Lana Turner, Mickey Rooney, lyricist Paul Francis Webster, and screenwriter W.R. Burnett. As the music played and the liquor flowed, everyone's spirits soared higher and higher until it was decided that Ellington, Kuller and Webster would collaborate on a satirical revue to be called *Jump For Joy*, with Garfield and Burnett as financial backers. Ellington, in typical fashion, had utterly failed to consider how or when the music for this show would be composed before making this rather large commitment. It is clear that he could not take time off to create the music for this show. His band had engagements from coast to coast booked from late February until late May. It seems that the only time Ellington dedicated to this project was while his band was playing at the Trianon Ballroom in Southgate, California (May 29 – June 18), and then for the remaining weeks of June and into early July. *Jump For Joy* was scheduled to open at the Mayan Theater in Los Angeles on July 10, 1941. It also appears that while Ellington toured with his band during this interval, Billy Strayhorn remained in Los Angeles to act as Duke's liaison with the show's writers (eventually there were many more than Kuller and Webster), and performers.



Mayan Theatre.

Strayhorn's contribution

As dozens of surviving manuscripts illustrate, Strayhorn was deeply involved in *Jump For Joy*, though it is virtually impossible to ascertain to what extent his contributions were originals, arrangements, or collaborative works with Ellington since the latter's hand is on a number of scores as well. In addition to his and Ellington's compositions, Strayhorn arranged the majority of contributions by other composers and lyricists involved with the production – Hal Borne, Paul Webster, Otis René, Mickey Rooney, and Sidney Miller. My conclusion from this and from the well documented history of subsequent similar large-scale Ellington projects is that the eventual collaborative technique used by Ellington involving Strayhorn on special projects was first developed as *Jump For Joy* lurched uncertainly toward its opening. Undoubtedly, Ellington composed a large number of songs for *Jump For Joy* – eleven are listed in *The Playgoer*, the official publication of the Mayan Theater for the show. There were more than fifty sketches and musical numbers written for the review, eventually thirty were used during the show's run. Some were deleted along the way, replaced by others. But Strayhorn's musical fingerprints are nevertheless all over the music. The

one composition from *Jump For Joy* that is wholly a creation of Strayhorn, the harmonically adventurous *Flame Indigo*, was so far advanced from what was going on in jazz arranging then, that Ellington set it aside, and never recorded.

The standard *I Got It Bad*, which was composed by Ellington, perhaps with some assistance from Strayhorn, was arranged by Billy for *Jump For Joy*, and that arrangement was edited by Strayhorn for Ellington's Victor recording (June 25, 1941) of this song, which featured an Ivie Anderson vocal. For the evocative recording of *Rocks In My Bed* (September 29, 1941), Ellington arranged the band part of the recording, Strayhorn the vocal part. But as usual, Strayhorn did not simply set a background for the Ivie Anderson vocal chorus. Strayhorn breaks away from the I-IV-V blues changes, replacing them with a liquid string of dominants that are connected with chromatic passing chords. As a result of the substitute chords, he has to adapt the melody significantly, consequently nothing of the original passage remains, apart from the lyrics. Strayhorn's role has changed from arranger to co-composer.

The Show

The show ran for less than three months, closing on September 27, 1941, after just 101 performances, but its significances as a social statement, a groundbreaking theatrical production, and as a statement of Ellington's artistry, conscience, and future direction was inestimable. Although generally not regarded as one of Ellington's major works, *Jump For Joy* nonetheless was the direct antecedent in both spirit and technique, to his *Black, Brown and Beige*, widely considered to be among his most important.

As I have noted in my blog previously, Duke Ellington was a master of the blues, and Billy Strayhorn was a master of vocal arrangement. From his earliest days as Ellington's collaborator,

Strayhorn was given assignments by Duke to fashion provocative, colorful backgrounds for Ellington's singers. In this piece, where Ellington arranged the first instrumental half and Strayhorn the second vocal half, their collaboration resulted in a perfect whole.

Alto saxophone wizard Johnny Hodges sets forth the melody at the very top of the performance (there is no introduction). His playing here is quintessential: a huge, rich ringing sound coupled with flawless technique, and lots of soul. Ellington supports Hodges with a thick sonic cushion provided by his three trombones, plus Harry Carney's baritone saxophone. Barney Bigard, one of New Orleans's most famous clarinetists, follows with some full-toned, cascading notes. Listen to how Ellington, the master arranger, contrasts Bigard's woody clarinet sonority with the rumbling low sound of Harry Carney's baritone saxophone, both on its own and leading various instrumental groups. Ellington very often deployed Carney's massive sound in many creative ways in the ensemble writing he did for his band. Indeed, the sound of Carney's baritone saxophone was one of the most identifiable in the Ellington ensemble.

Ivie Anderson

Ivie Anderson was one of the best and most versatile vocalists of the swing era. The renowned jazz critic Nat Hentoff said this about her: "... easily the most sensitive and musical female vocalist Ellington ever had She sang with a simplicity so artless that she is ... remarkably neglected in ... writings about jazz ... She sang with a supple warmth and caressing beat that made her one of the unforgettable voices in jazz ... direct, completely unpretentious and ungimmicked." Like everyone else in the Ellington band in 1941, she had her own sound, and a very personal style that has

remained fresh. Her voice was strong and robust, yet she could and did use it with great delicacy, as she does here. The lyric for *Rocks In My Bed*, which was written by Ellington, is highly ironic, as was the entirety of the material in the revue *Jump For Joy*, in which it was sung by blues singer Joe Turner. Among the most

words *I got rocks in my bed*, sung by Ivie after a brief Ellington piano solo, her singing is highlighted by a drumming masterstroke (two sly thuds by Sonny Greer on his tom-tom) to subtly suggest what is missing in her love life.

Ivie Anderson left the Ellington band in August of 1942 to get off the road and live in her Los Angeles home. She opened a restaurant (Ivie's Chicken Shack), which she operated for a while, and continued singing, though she did not tour. She suffered from chronic asthma, which led to her death in 1949 at age 44.

Billy Strayhorn's composition *Flame Indigo* was not recorded at all until October of 1998, when it was recorded by the Dutch Jazz Orchestra as a part of its heroic work in recording many previously unrecorded and often unknown Strayhorn compositions/arrangements (Challenge Records CRH 70091). Based on this recording, Strayhorn envisioned *Flame Indigo* as a showcase for the alto saxophone of Johnny Hodges, and the tenor of Ben Webster.

Rocks In My Bed was sung in the show by blues singer Joe Turner, who made the first recording of it on September 8, 1941, with the Freddie Slack Trio. Among the most memorable lines in the lyric sung on the Ellington recording by Ivie Anderson: "... underloved, overfed, my man's gone, so I instead got rocks in my bed." Even more suggestive are these lines from another song from *Jump For Joy*, the delightful Chocolate Shake recorded on June 25, 1941, by Ellington: "It was under an African sun, that Stanley met

old Livingstone, While the gals shook their fruit, He blew on his flute, Ziggin' the sagan route."

Mike Zirpolo is running a website "Swing & Beyond" with lots of interesting studies of music by various orchestras from the Swing Era. Go to: www.swingandbeyond.com

Rocks In My Bed

Lyrics by Duke Ellington

*My heart is heavy as lead
Because the blues has done spread
Rocks in my bed*

*Of all the people I see
Why do they pick on poor me
And put rocks in my bed*

*All night long I weep
So how can I sleep
With rocks in my bed*

*There's only two kinds of people
I can't understand
There's only two kinds of people
I can't understand
That's a deceitful woman
And a hard faced man*

*She took my man away
And ain't goin' bring him back
She took my man away
And ain't goin' bring him back
She's lower than a snake down in a wagon track*

*Under-loved, over-fed
My man's gone, so instead
I got rocks in my bed
Under-loved, over-fed
My man's gone, so instead
I got rocks in my bed*

memorable lines in the lyric sung on this recording by Ivie Anderson: "... underloved, overfed, my man's gone, so instead I got rocks in my bed."

The shifting and colorful instrumental backgrounds fashioned by Strayhorn against which Ivie sings are indeed provocative. In the first repetition of the

Den 26:e Ellingtonkonferensen

När de regelbundna Ellingtonkonferenserna började arrangeras i början av 1980-talet var det de lokala Ellingtonföreningarna runt om i världen som arrangerade dem. Så var förhållandet ända in på 2000-talet. Under dessa år hade vi nöjet att få träffa många av Ellingtons ännu levande medarbetare och andra personligheter, som haft en nära relation till Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn och andra musiker runt Ellington. I dag är situationen något annorlunda. De existerande Ellingtonföreningarna har inte längre vare sig ekonomiska eller personella resurser för att arrangera en konferens. Andra instanser måste ställa upp och det är numera olika universitet som genomför konferenserna på ett typiskt akademiskt sätt. Detta har också satt sin prägel på konferensernas innehåll. Vi får i mindre utsträckning njuta av kåserier av de som en gång kände Ellington och människorna runt honom och i stället lyssna på mera djupgående akademiska analyser av något av Ellingtons verk. På gott eller ont låter jag vara osagt. Nästa konferens kommer att gå av stapeln i mars nästa år och arrangeras av Georgetown University i Washington. Man har nyligen gått ut med ett s.k. "Call for papers", vilket citeras nedan:

**26th International Duke Ellington
Study Group Conference**
March 11-15, 2020

Georgetown University –
Washington, DC.

MAPPING DUKE ELLINGTON'S WORLD

The theme for this year's conference is *Mapping Duke Ellington's World*. This theme is broadly conceived and can include presentations/performances on a range of topics, including Ellington's travels/tours, Ellington's collaborators, Ellington's collections/archives around the world, transcription as a form of musical landscapes in Ellington's works, mapping the Ellington imagination, Ellington and film, Ellington iconography, and the reception history of Ellington's works/performances. Please note that adherence to this theme is not mandatory, and that in an effort to be as inclusive as possible, papers on all topics related to Ellington studies will be considered.

This five-day multidisciplinary conference will bring together leading researchers and performers across the arts and humanities. The event will feature academic papers, panels, roundtables, and cultural walks/visits, as well as an exciting program of performances by local Washington DC performers. Paper presentations will last 20 minutes (with 10 minutes for questions). Performance presentations should adhere to a 30-minute or 50-minute length. Roundtable

discussion sessions will last 40 minutes (with 20 minutes for questions).

Presentation proposals are now being accepted. Please submit proposals (max. 300 words), and a short biography (max. 100 words) as a Word document or PDF file via email (subject line "Ellington Proposal") to Prof. Anna Celenza, anna.celenza@georgetown.edu no later than **15 August 2019**. Selected participants will be notified by 15 October 2019.



I nuläget vet vi att som s.k. Keynote speakers har annonserats Prof. Thomas Brothers (författare till boken *Help!*, som anmäldes i förra Bulletinen), Dr. John Hasse och Prof. Tammy Kernodle. Vidare har vi förstått att Carl Woideck kommer att fördjupa sig i Ellingtons *Ad Lib On Nippon* och Steven Lasker kommer att berätta om de nya fynd han gjort av okänt Ellingtonmaterial från 1946. Det skulle inte förvåna oss om David Palmquist dessutom kommer att laborera på ämnet "Ellington's travels/tours" illustrerat av hans TDWAW.

Konferensavgiften är \$100:- vid anmälan före den 15 december. Därefter 150:-. Som hotell rekommenderar man Georgetown University Hotel & Conference Center, där man erbjuder ett dubbelrum för \$189:- per natt. Ytterligare detaljer finns på <https://www.ellington2020.org>.

Bo Haufman

Minneskonsert i Gustaf Vasa Kyrka

Den 6 november 1969 uppträdde Duke Ellington och hans orkester, förstärkt med Alice Babs, i Gustaf Vasa Kyrkan i Stockholm och framförde *The Second Sacred Concert*. Konserten blev en stor succé och den finns utgiven i olika former, bl.a. som DVD. Den 12 juni i år, nästan 50 år senare, arrangerade Svenska Kyrkan en sommarkvällskonsert till äminnelse av Ellingtons konsert. Medverkande var Immanuel Big Band under ledning av Lina Lövstrand och med Frida Matsdotter i Alice Babs

roll samt Gustaf Vasa Kammarkör ledd av Lars Fredén. Kyrkan var i det närmast fylld, vilket delvis kan ha sin förklaring i att inträdet var gratis. Orkester och kör framförde valda delar ur Ellingtons *Sacred Concerts* på ett alldeles utmärkt sätt. Akustiken i kyrkan är förnämlig, men instrumentalsolisterna spelade utan mikrofon och deras insatser dränktes av den kraftfulla kören. Men alla åhörare torde ändå ha varit mer än nöjda med förställningen.

Bo Haufman

Nya medlemmar

DESS hälsar följande nya medlemmar välkomna i vår illustra förening:

Bengt Ahling, Stockholm
Thomas Cunniffe, Denver, CD., USA

DESS behöver fler medlemmar.

Inspirera Dina vänner och bekanta att också vara med!

Duke Ellington på besök i Storvik den 23 april 1939

Många DESS-medlemmar kanske är osäkra på var man kan hitta Storvik på världskartan eftersom orten i dag kan tyckas obetydlig. Under 1800-talets senare hälft, då man byggde stambanorna i Sverige, hade man kommit fram till att två viktiga järnvägslinjer skulle korsa varandra här, vilket ledde till att det lilla samhället blev en viktig knutpunkt med en stor järnvägsstation, hotell, restaurang m.m. Orten fick så småningom status av köping, men ingår efter kommun-sammanslagningen 1971 i Sandvikens kommun. Tågen fortsätter att passera här, men stationen är inte längre i ursprungligt skick.

Duke Ellington och hans orkester gjorde i april 1939 en månadsång turné i Europa och Skandinavien och besökte bl.a. Frankrike, Holland och Belgien, men huvuddelen av turnén tillbringade man i Sverige med några avstickare till Norge och Danmark. Färden gick med järnväg från Holland via Hamburg till Skandinavien. Det sägs att musikerna blev besvikna för att inte kunna få några riktiga hamburgare då staden passerades. Den första konserten hölls i Malmö den



1 april och den sista i Varberg den 1 maj 1939. Totalt hölls 19 konserter i Sverige på 16 orter. Den 22 april hade orkestern kommit till Eskilstuna, där man hade en konsert på kvällen, och nästa morgon satte man sig på tåget till Storvik, för en konsert där kl 14:30 på eftermiddagen. Därefter skulle man ta tåget till Uppsala för ytterligare en konsert på kvällen samma dag. Att Storvik valdes för konserten, trots sin litenhet och primitiva förhållan-



den, lär ha berott på att man i Gävle just då hade svårt att erbjuda en konsertlokal med tillräcklig publikkapacitet. Parkhallen i Storvik kunde dock ta emot 1500 besökare eller fler.

Den 23 april var det vårvinter med lite nysnö i Storvik och enligt uppgift (kanske en skröna?) transporterades Duke Ellington de få hundratalet metrarna på sparkstötting mellan järnvägsstationen och Parkhallen av en person som kallades Skol-Pelle, men dennes son kan i dag varken bekräfta eller dementera påståendet. Tänk om det funnits ett fotografi som bevis! Enligt en annan källa så skall en del av musikerna också ha forslats på sparkstöttingar till den lokala restaurangen Granliden, som fortfarande existerar.

Parkhallen finns kvar och används för bl.a. innebandy, men det är tveksamt hur länge den får finnas kvar. Man lyckades i alla fall vid Ellingtons besök inhysa c:a 1800 åskådare, vilket torde ha varit i paritet med ortens totala folkmängd på den tiden. Enligt vad tidningarna skrev får man betrakta evenemanget som mycket lyckat. Säkerligen var det många entusiaster, som tog tåget till Storvik både från när och fjärran.

Några tidningsrecensioner avbildas här och som synes utdelas en och annan pekpinne. Jag har tidigare pratat med några personer som bevistade konserten, men nu 80 år senare finns knappast några kvar av de unga entusiaster som fanns bland åhörarna.

Jag har lyckats lokalisera ett par bilder från själva konserten, där man på den ena ser Parkhallens välvda tak och på den andra Duke, som välkomnas av delar av publiken. Det rör sig om tämligen unika foton, som ställts till mitt förfogande av Lars Westin, vilket jag tackar för.

Tyvärr så finns inte så mycket bevarat i musikkväg från denna turné. Det enda som hittats är tre låtar och en intervju av Manne Berggren från Sveriges Radio samt en kort stumfilm från Amsterdam. Sveriges Radios inspelningar återfinns bl.a. på den CD som gavs ut i samband med Ellingtonkonferensen i Stockholm 1994 samt på en eller annan LP-utgåva (bl.a. MAX 1001).

Artikeln, med ytterligare illustrationer, finns publicerad på DESS webbplats: <https://ellington.se/2018/04/23/duke-ellington-i-storvik-den-23-april-1939/#more-9399>.

Anders Asplund

"DAGS-kronika". Jazz-dag i Storvik.

En dansk litteraturhistoriker här skrivit en studie över "Bacchustaget i Norden". Han följer där, hur den grekiska, dionysiska livsglädjen har fått utlopp i nordisk diktning. Främst kanske hos Bellman, om vilken Tegnéér skrev, att hans diktning var en dans "på gudaberget dansad av nyföt och faun och sång-möss på en gång".

Samma dionysiska livsglädje möter man faktiskt hos Duke Ellington. Hans konsertturné genom vårt land har också en viss karaktär av ett den musikaliska extasens triumftåg. Han bringar här en ny musikalisk rikedom till en festlyras tradition, denna gång från Afrika-Amerika.

Duke Ellington och hans orkester framträdde på söndagsförmiddagen inför en enorm publik i Folkets parkhallen i Storvik. Det var en egendomligt effektrik, målerisk dag. Världen stod dränkt i mjuk, lös smö och mot detta gräddvispaktiga -skum framträdde de chokladbruna negerpersonerna dubbel pittoreska.

Bakgrunden för orkestern i parkhallen var inte precis stämningssäckande för ett konsert-uppträdande. Den var skriande som ett svenskt-amerikanskt cykork med orkestermedlemmarna med sin instrumentutrustning uppradade framför denna kulliss av ett svenskt landskap. Men till och med denna förskräckliga stilbrytning blev smänningom åttakilligt sägande för eftertanken. Denna sugande musik, som har sin genklang i så vida massor hos svensk ungdom, denna gestaltning av längtan och rörelsemotiv, får också hemortarätt i svenska bygder, smälter samman med vårskyminngen och blir en genuin ton i naturen. Det är alldeles hopplöst att göra någonting annat gällande. Man måste böja sig för den anslutning, som denna musik fått i vida kretsar hos modern, svensk, sund ungdom, som i den funnit uttryck för någonting väsentligt och tidsbetonat.

Det var också påfallande, hur den väldiga konsertpubliken rycktes med i dessa melodier. Och det var visst inte enbart inför de betiga numren, utan det fanns en samlad, förtärad stillhet inför andra, ynkare nummer. Här fanns en medkännande publik, som knappast på någon vanlig konsert, och detta har nå-

g Duke Ellington såsom mänsklig typ var också högst intressant. I en tid, då från tribunerna framträdde folkledare med brutala gester och hårda röster, kommer denne musikens apostel såsom en den stora, internationella förbrödringens man. Han är hjärtlig alltigenom, mänsklig, sympatisk, leende utan all faddhet. Och denna mänsklighet griper på ett säkert sätt i denna omänskliga tid.

Rent musikaliskt har också Duke Ellington en stor mission. Jazzen har räddat musikens framträdande genom det otal försvikningar och slätstrukna uppträdanden, som förekommer mestadels. Men här framfördes en rad originalnummer, som framstod med en så betagande verkan, att man lät alla sina förutfattade meningar falla till golvet. Det var som att sträva på praktfulla, afrikanska vävningar, fyllda av musikaliska visioner. Man gled in i denna hemlighetsfullt sugande djungel av mystiska musikaliska bildspråk, och man måste runt omkring sig märka en värld dofta och lysa i red flammade färger och tons med säregna melodier.

Visserligen gavs inte hela det långa programmet, utan endast en del; men det var ändå en karaktär av slösande givmildhet över uppträdandet. Duke Ellington själv gav sig helt och han hade orkestern i sin hand som en cirkusdirektör sina elefantbaby. Och dessa enskilda orkestermedlemmar och solister utförde stundtals formliga musikaliska underverk på sina instrument. Om somat lät akkrallande och bisarrt, så var annat desto mera intensivt medryckande.

Ett nummer hette "Karavan". För fantasien blev detta identiskt med Duke Ellington och hans orkester på deras färd. De draga fram i ett rus av rytmisk hänförelse och mot detta musikaliska Bacchustag sträcka människomassorna sina händer. Man applåderade ett av vägsvall. Det steg en väg av tacksamhet från denna publikmassa mot orkestern, och detta kan endast tolkas så, att dessa ungdomsgrupper här kände livets hjärta slå, starkt och mäktigt och fyllt av spelmansglädje.

Dag.

Borgmästarvalet.

Vid borgmästarvalet i Uppsala på söndagen erhöll rådmann Zameo Schmidt, Uppsala, 3006 röster och hovrättsrådet Bertil Hagström, Stockholm, 2,505 röster. Valet stod endast mellan dessa två. Rådman Schmidt var som bekant socialdemokraternas kandidat. Han har tidigare varit nolarie bl. a. vid Gäst-

1939-04-24
Teater - Musik

Duke Ellington

gästade Storvik i går och visade vad han och hans orkester går för.

Ibland var det mycket väsen för ingenting och ibland mindre väsen och mer musik. Det är oneklig en intressant herre med frodig instrumental fantasi. I hans 14-mannaorkester fanns inte ett enda stråkinstrument, det var blåsarna som var huvudsaken och slagverk förstas.

De, som verkligen uppskatta vråhottjazz, torde icke ha gått besvikna därifrån. Men även andra riktningar inom jazzen fick man smakprov på, nämligen en god instrumentering, som kom väl till sin rätt genom de skickliga solister orkestern äger. Man är ledaren tacksam för att han inte bjöd på östasiatisk romantik.

Däremot fick man höra några lugnare melodier i ett briljant arrangemang, som konstnärligt sett visade hans starkaste sida. Detta slog också mest av Bland alla de 16 spelade numren segrade utan tvivel »Mood Indigo». Den blev rent av lyrisk i sitt tjugiga utförande på sordinerade trumpetor och basun med ett diskret ackompanjemang. Av övriga stycken må främst nämnas »Black and tan fantasy», »Sophisticated lady» och »Caravan».

De olika musikernas prestationer voro beundraansvärda trots en del överdrifter. Dessutom låg det humor i rikt mått bakom. Trumpet- och basunsolisterna voro helt enkelt dräpliga i sina imitationer. Batteristen gick inte till osmaklig överdrift, han var välgörande lagom och Duke själv visade sig vara en aktningvärd pianist.

Vad samspelet beträffar, var det precision och tydligen mycken träning bakom. En sak kom man fullt till klarhet med: det är stor skillnad på dansmusik och jazzmusik, kom ihåg det!

Om något skall kritiseras, så är det publiken. När man betalar så dyra biljettpreiser för att få höra vad man längtar efter, skall man inte skrika och vråla så fort en solist gjort sitt, under det orkestern spelar. Man väntar tills stycket är slut.



Duke Ellington välkomnas av några åskådare.

The Savory Collection

Som tidigare meddelats i Bulletin, disponerar The National Jazz Museum in Harlem denna unika samling av hittills okända radio-upptagningar från 1930/40-talet. DESS-medlemmen Remco Plas har besökt museet, lyssnat på materialet och rapporterar följande:

After the New York Conference I went to the Jazz Museum in Harlem and spent the afternoon listening to the Savory Collection. There is not that much Ellington in the collection, just enough to fill one CD. From the notes I made:

Honeysuckle Rose (with Django Reinhardt) 3:28

Improvisation (Django solo) 3:02

Martin Block broadcast: Saredo? (I can't read my handwriting), Hodge Podge, Jeep's Blues 12:42

Martin Block broadcast: Tiger Rag, On The Sunny Side Of The Street, The Jeep Is Jumpin' 15:18

Tooting Through The Roof CBS Young Man With A Band 4:54

Exactly Like You (with Bob Crosby) 5:06

Down Town Uproar into closing theme Diminuendo in Blue 4:41

China Boy, My Old Flame 5:07

Scattin' At The Kit Kat 1:53

Rendez-Vous With Rhythm, Sextetta, Hodge Podge, Jeep's Blues 12:14

Happy-Go-Lucky-Local, Improvisation, Honeysuckle Rose (From Carnegie Hall) 14:33 (Last two with Django and same as the first two)

There is enough Benny Goodman material to fill a whole box.

Vi tackar Remco för dessa intressanta uppgifter. Loren Schoenberg har presenterat delar av detta material på nätet, se <http://jazzmuseuminharlem.org/events/savory-session-2/>. En del finns även på iTunes och delar har getts ut i en box av Mosaic.

Bo Hausman

Mood Indigo

Denna komposition torde vara en av Duke Ellingtons mest spelade. Den ingick i hans repertoar från 1930 ända fram till 1974. Barney Bigard står angiven som medkompositör och han lär ha hört temat från sin tid i New Orleans. Med Ellingtons arrangemang utvecklades numret till ett av orkestrernas mest populära. Initialt gick det under namnet *Dreamy Blues* innan det fick det mera fantasifulla namnet *Mood Indigo*.

Barney Bigard har uppgivit att han hörde temat när han studerade för sin lärare Lorenzo Tio, Jr. i New Orleans. Al Rose, en auktoritet på New Orleans-jazz, har emellertid uppgivit att han hörde melodin i sin helhet spelad av A.J. Priors orkester innan Ellington gjorde den känd. När kompositionen förlades stod Duke Ellington tillsammans med Irving Mills angivna som kompositörer. Det var först efter ett antal juridiska turer, som även Barney Bigard blev erkänd som medkompositör. Han fick vänta ända till 1958 innan han fick det erkännandet. Mills bidrag kan möjligen ha bestått av texten till melodin, men det tog åtskilliga år innan Ellington gjorde en vokalinspelning av numret.



Under 44 års tid genomgick numret vissa förändringar tack vare Ellingtons sinne för variationer, men också på grund av personella förändringar i orkestern under årens lopp. Det är speciellt intressant att studera hur den temapresenterande trion förändrades under dessa år. Initialt bestod trion av Arthur Whetsel på trumpet, Joe Nanton trombon och Barney Bigard på klarinett. Enligt etablerade konventioner spelade alltid trumpeteten

melodistämman medan klarinetten modulerade i diskanten och trombonen hanterade basgångarna. Så är det som regel än i dag. Ellington tog sig emellertid friheten att i sitt arrangemang vända på det konventionella sättet att hantera instrumenten. I stället för att låta klarinetten ligga i diskanten låter han den få hantera basgångarna samtidigt som trombonen får ligga strax under trumpeteten. Ett lyckat koncept som Ellington skulle komma att använda sig av vid flera tillfällen i framtiden.

Efter Arthur Whetsels bortgång tog Wallace Jones över hans roll i trion och sedermera Shelton Hemphill. När Joe Nanton avled togs hans position först över av Wilbur De Paris, men senare av Tyree Glenn, samtidigt som Nelson Williams ersatte Shelton Hemphill.

Nya grepp

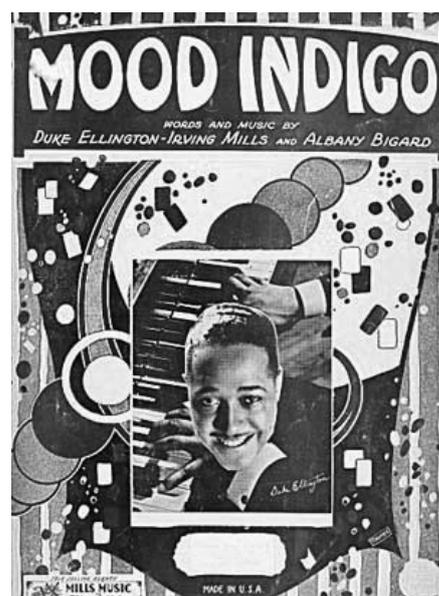
1950 tog Duke Ellington ett nytt grepp om melodin. För att tydligare accentuera klarinetternas basgångar bytte han ut den mot Harry Carneys basklarinett, som kompletterades av två tromboner spelade av Tyree Glenn och Quentin Jackson. Senare skulle Tyree Glenn komma att ersättas av Britt Woodman. Det existerar faktiskt en ännu outgiven inspelning från 1953 där trion består av Russell Procope och Jimmy Hamilton på klarinett tillsammans med Harry Carneys basklarinett. Under resten av 1950-talet skulle numret alltid komma att framföras av två tromboner plus basklarinett.

Ett nytt grepp tar Ellington tillsammans med Lawrence Brown i *Mood Indigo* ingående i Columbia-LPn "Unknown Session" där Brown på ett magnifikt sätt framför melodin, och trion bestående av Johnny Hodges, Ray Nance och Harry Carney backar upp honom.

En av de i särklass vackraste inspelningarna av *Mood Indigo* är inspelningen med Coleman Hawkins i Impuls-LPn "Duke Ellington meets Coleman Hawkins". Hawkins behandlar melodin på ett helt underbart sätt medan trion även här utgörs av Hodges, Nance och Carney.

När Duke Ellington under 1960-talets konserter framförde numret bestod trion som regel av Russell Procope, Lawrence Brown och Harry Carney. Carney alltid med sin basklarinett.

Under slutet av 1960-talet hade Duke Ellington återkommande engagemang på Rainbow Grill i New York med en reducerad orkester och då spelades all-



tid *Mood Indigo* med trion Johnny Hodges, Lawrence Brown och Harry Carney. Vid dessa återkommande engagemang ingick som regel aldrig någon genuin klarinettist i den oktett, som Ellington av utrymmesskäl var tvungen att begränsa sig till.

Vid inspelningarna på 1970-talet bestod trion som regel av Russell Procope på klarinett, Harold Ashby på tenor och som vanligt Harry Carney med sin basklarinett.

Vid flera tillfällen har olika instrumentalister i Ellingtons orkester gjort vackra tolkningar av *Mood Indigo*. Utöver Lawrence Brown, som nämnts tidigare, har Willie Cook, Tyree Glenn och Harold Baker gjort fina tolkningar av temat. Även Russell Procope och Harold Ashby har fått uttrycka sig och naturligtvis har Duke Ellington själv vid åtskilliga tillfällen gett sin version av melodin.

Bo Hauffman

Frank Sebastian's Cotton Club

När namnet Cotton Club nämns, förs naturligtvis tankarna till den exklusiva nattklubb i New York, där Duke Ellington var engagerad från slutet av 1927 till mars 1931. Men det fanns ytterligare en Cotton Club, belägen i Los Angeles eller närmare bestämt i Culver City. Den gick under namnet Sebastian's Cotton Club, och som namnet antyder ägdes den av en herre vid namn Frank Sebastian. Duke Ellington skulle under sin långa karriär ha flera engagemang på detta etablissemang.

Frank Sebastian var en entreprenör i nöjesbranschen och startade tidigt en restaurang i förstaden Venice, som han kallade Sebastian's Café eller stundom Café Venice. Man specialiserade sig på att servera fransk och italiensk mat, och därtill musikalisk underhållning, oftast jazz. 1926 gick han vidare och övertog en lokal i Culver City kallad Green Mill Café, som han döpte om till Sebastian's Cotton Club, vars namn och inriktning var influerad av den mera kända Cotton Club i New York. Precis som förebilden engagerade Sebastian huvudsakligen enbart färgade orkestrar och artister, medan klientelet utgjordes av enbart vita. Klubben kunde ta emot 1200 gäster och hade tre dansgolv.



Under årens lopp har många kända artister och orkestrar uppträtt på Sebastian's Cotton Club. Även vita band engagerades senare. Klubben hade en tid en egen orkester som gick under det originella namnet Sebastian's Cotton Club Orchestra, som i realiteten var Les Hite's Orchestra, vari både Lawrence Brown och Lionel Hampton ingick. Paul Howard's Quality Serenaders var också en av de tidiga orkestrarna som uppträdde på klubben. Fats Waller var en återkommande artist liksom Louis



Les Hites orkester med Lawrence Brown och Lionel Hampton och i förgrunden Les Hite, Frank Sebastian plus okänd. Kvartetten främst till höger ingår inte i Les Hites orkester. Fotot ur Juan och Rose Tizol Collection och återges här med tillstånd av Steven Lasker.

Armstrong. Den senare gjorde ett antal inspelningar i Los Angeles 1930 och ackompanjerades då av "His Sebastian New Cotton Club Orchestra". Duke Ellington hade ett längre engagemang på klubben vid årsskiftet 1936/37. Artie Shaw, Cab Calloway och Tommy Dorsey m.fl. hade också återkommande engagemang på Sebastian's Cotton Club.

Obekräftade rykten gör gällande att Frank Sebastian hade vissa relationer med maffian och han råkade därför i klammeri med polis och myndigheter. Kanske av denna anledning lade han ner klubben 1938. Han ägnade sig fortsättningsvis åt restaurang- och klubbverksamhet i mindre omfattning på andra platser i Kalifornien och var även engagerad i hotellrörelser. Men bara några månader efter Cotton Clubs nedläggning återuppstod klubben, nu med namnet Casa Mañana. Under den nya ledningen påstods klubben inte visa upp samma elegans som tidigare, men den var ett populärt dansställe under krigsåren. Stället tog över mycket av den publik som tidigare frekventerade Palomar Ballroom,

som brann ner 1938. Duke Ellington var engagerad på Casa Mañana vid två tillfällen, januari 1941 och mars 1945. Radioutsändningar gjordes vid båda tillfällena och flera av dessa har getts ut på skiva.

Men även Casa Mañana kom till vägs ände. 1945 bytte lokalen ägare och namnet ändrades till Meadowbrook Gardens Café. Duke Ellington och hans orkester var engagerade där i augusti 1946. Flera radioutsändningar gjordes vid detta tillfälle och många ingår i DETS-serien. Ellington hade senare ett tvådagars engagemang i oktober 1947. Även då gjordes radioutsändningar, som finns bevarade men som ännu inte getts ut, med undantag för *H'ya Sue*, som getts ut på det lilla italienska märket Musica Jazz.

1948 bytte lokalerna ägare ännu en gång och fick namnet Zucca's Opera House. Där erbjöds all slags underhållning utom opera. Emellertid utsattes lokalen för en svår brand 1950, som totalförstörde byggnaden och därmed avslutades sagan om Sebastian's Cotton Club.

Bo Hausman

Al Sears – An original voice (part 2)

By Nigel Haslewood

The following article was originally published in the IAJRC Journal. Vol. 50, No. 3 and with IAJRC's and Nigel Haslewood's consent we reprint the second part of it in this issue. The first part can be found in our previous Bulletin.

Leaving Duke

The following year saw Sears' departure from the Ellington Orchestra, ostensibly because he was fed up with the constant travelling the band had to undertake. Other factors were probably important too. Ben Webster was now sitting alongside him in the reed section. If one examines the evidence available, it is noticeable that a lot of the solo duties undertaken by Sears were now given to the returnee. In the case of arrangements like *Cotton Tail*, this is perfectly understandable, but Webster's new responsibilities even included taking over Sears' role in *It Don't Mean A Thing*. Also, the reason Ellington gave for hiring Webster doesn't make complete sense. He cited the main reason as being Jimmy Hamilton's reluctance to play tenor sax. However, study of the recordings made at the time reveals the clarinetist playing far more solo spots on his second instrument than were given to Al Sears. All of this may perhaps have been his reluctance to press his case, arising from the streak of modesty already mentioned.

Another reason for his departure could have been his sense of where the music scene was heading. The late-1940s were, in some ways, the least successful of Ellington's career, prompting him at one stage during 1948 to temporarily give up his band altogether and undergo a tour of the UK on which he was joined only by Ray Nance and Kay Davis. Studio recordings were also thin on the ground with a second union ban running throughout that same year. Ellington's new contract with Columbia

also made a somewhat shaky start. Although the company allowed him to record the *Liberian Suite*, already referred to above, most of the rest of the material was ephemeral with a mixture of popular and novelty songs together with hastily put together instrumentals. There is little to be heard from Sears in these performances.

The other side of the coin to this was his view of his own abilities. In later interviews, he praised the music made by modern jazz players on his instrument while acknowledging that he lacked the technical facility to follow their example. However, he was obviously aware that the growing popularity of R&B at this time opened up opportunities that he could take advantage of. His subsequent career showed just how right he was.

Finally, it may have been the case that his relationship with Ellington had deteriorated from what had been a high point just after he joined the orchestra. His reluctance to become a band member has already been mentioned. In an interview with him by George Simon for *Metronome* published in 1945, he talked of his unease of the leader's musical methods when he first started playing with him. Used to the tight discipline of Vernon Andrade's and his own orchestras, he found the partial arrangements used by the Ellington orchestra rather confusing. Obviously, he soon got used to them and for a time became one of the main soloists. His new stature can be seen by the fact that he received votes in the annual critics' polls conducted by *Esquire*. He also received the votes of Harry Carney and Ellington himself in a similar poll of musicians for the same magazine in the new star category.

The leader also praised Sears' general demeanor, describing him as a "gentleman", and telling Barry Ulanov that he was his preferred opponent in the card games that occupied much of the travelling from one job to another. Although,

as Ulanov points out, this may have been because Ellington normally won. Sears' own success as a bandleader and his business experience may also have attracted Duke to him, but that perhaps early offers of advice in this area, while welcome initially, may have become to be seen as unnecessary or even meddling later on. It does seem odd that someone whom Duke spoke so highly of in the mid-1940s should become someone not considered worthy of mention later on.

Before leaving discussion of his years with Ellington, mention should be made of the small group recordings made by Sears during that time. Unlike the late-1930s and early-1940s, when Irving Mills and then RCA Victor both made efforts to commit small Ellingtonian units to wax, there was no such organized program in the mid-to-late-1940s. However, unlike Vernon Andrade, Duke did not restrict his musicians' activities in this respect. Sears took part in several sessions under the leadership of Johnny Hodges, most of which were made for the Mercer label. As its name suggests, this was partly owned by Ellington. However, the tenor player gets little chance to solo on these. His appearances on V-Discs with a group led alternatively by Ella Fitzgerald or Buddy Rich were similarly restricted to short solo appearances. This pattern is repeated on other studio outings such as those under the leadership of Ray Nance, Rex Stewart and Leonard Feather, or while accompanying Al Hibbler. However, Sears did get one chance to record a session under his own name during 1945. This was organized by a small independent label called "International". The resulting 78 came out as part of an album also including sides by Don Byas and Jerry Jerome. It appears to have been issued, at least partly, as a teaching aide for budding tenor players with musical notation included as part of the package.



Sonny Greer, Johnny Hodges, Lloyd Trotman, Lawrence Brown and Al Sears.

The “All-Star Rhythm Section” used to accompany the solo players, made up of Gene Schroeder, Tony Gotusso, Slim Dunham, and Johnny Blowers, might not seem ideal, especially for more modern-leaning players. However, both of Sears’ efforts are worth hearing, especially *Long, Long Ago*, which again shows off the more thoughtful side of his playing.

After Duke

Soon after leaving the Ellington Orchestra, Sears obtained a recording opportunity with the Decca subsidiary, Coral, for which he made four sides for their new 65000 series in December 1949. This was Coral’s equivalent of the Decca 48000s, discs aimed at an African-American audience increasingly turned on by R&B in addition to older staples like jazz and gospel. All four saw issue on two 78s but are certainly not a highlight of Sears’ discography, as the session included two dull ballad performances by Clarence Palmer. The first two years of his new career passed with little fanfare. He appears to have worked reasonably regularly leading a combo in Philadel-

phia with local tenor man Jimmy Oliver, and in New York, where in August 1950 his band played Bop City opposite one led by Earl Bostic. Apparently, he also acted as a “deb” from time to time back with Duke. It was the decision by Johnny Hodges, Lawrence Brown and Sonny Greer to leave Ellington in 1951 that provided Sears with his big opportunity. Although Hodges was the star and named leader of the small group that during the 1950s was formed as a result of this defection, it was the tenor player that ensured its success. While with Ellington, Sears had taken advantage of the touring schedule to befriend fans, promoters and, above all, disc jockeys in many of the towns and cities where the orchestra played. Now all these contacts proved to be central to the new venture’s success. Already, while with Duke, he had played the role of band booker and now he really came into his own as the person in sole charge of the management of the Hodges Orchestra.

The Johnny Hodges Orchestra

Firstly, he signed a contract with Norman Granz, who was launching his

new Clef label. The group then made a series of superb sides including many either written or arranged by Sears. Most heavily featured the leader’s popular ballad style or were bluesy instrumentals with Hodges again taking the major part of the solo space. As with the previous small group records made under his Ellington bandmate’s name, Sears was not prominent instrumentally. However, there were exceptions. For example, he wrote and soloed on the catchily titled, *Something To Pat Your Foot To*, a reference to the emphasis Sears had always placed on the rhythmic aspect of his playing.

The group played a series of bookings in major clubs and dance halls during which Sears renewed his acquaintance with influential people he had first met when with Duke’s band. These two aspects of his work came together, resulting in a hit record. He had noticed the reaction to an untitled blues the Hodges Orchestra played. This developed into *Castle Rock*, during which Sears employed his full range of effects to build up a solo of great power and energy. Now he was able to use his contacts, especially disc jockeys, to promote this new performance. Having obtained a pile of test pressings from Granz, he successfully persuaded many of them to heavily feature the tune on their programs. Among them was a young ex-trombonist named Alan Freed. Sears had earned his gratitude by introducing him to Ellington a few years earlier and who now repaid the debt by playing, apparently over and over again, this new record.

Becoming manager

Now Sears took another important decision for his career. Instead of building up his reputation as a player, as most with a hit record might have done, he decided to retire from the Hodges Orchestra. Instead, he concentrated on managing the group while building up an agency that could handle other acts as well. On top of this, he started a music publishing business, from where he was able to personally benefit from the success of *Castle Rock*, which had spawned several lucrative cover versions after lyrics had been added. This company was named Sylvia Music after his

daughter and he was joined in the venture by Budd Johnson, whom he had known since his days leading his USO orchestra.

He continued to handle the Hodges Orchestra for a while but it was not an easy relationship. Sears was well aware of the success that other alto players like Earl Bostic and Tab Smith were having with a repertoire slanted more towards R&B. However, his attempts to persuade Hodges to take this path fell on deaf ears. The veteran Ellington sideman was loath to alter a style which he felt had served him well up to that time. This decision undoubtedly led to his group having

ment had been made, after eight sides had been cut on September 21, using what was basically the Hodges group without its leader. As usual, Sears does not hog the limelight, allowing space for great solos by Emmett Berry and Lawrence Brown. There are also a few spots for Hilton Jefferson whose efforts were actually mistakenly identified as being by Hodges before accurate discographical information was available. Mention should also be made of the part played in the session by the pianist, Leroy Lovett, who shared the arranging and composing duties with the leader. *Now Ride The 'D' Train* is one such attractive

chosen by Freed to promote this new musical style in theatre shows and on his increasingly popular radio show. Sears even made it onto film again, being featured in the teen-musical *Rock, Rock, Rock* in 1955. Among the tunes featured was Freed's theme tune, *Right Now, Right Now*, written by Sears and Jesse Stone. He recorded this for Coral in 1955 and again in January 1956 for RCA, although the latter was not issued until much later. Both of these companies recorded other sessions by him during this period and he also recorded instrumental sides for Herald.

On these dates, Sears was able to use other jazz musicians who were also active in the new R&B field. An example is the all-star orchestra he was able to assemble in July 1956 for the RCA subsidiary, Groove. The two resulting sides, *Here's The Beat* and *Great Googa Mooga*, show at least some of the excitement Sears was able to generate on his many in-person appearances during this period. However, his main recording activity at this time centered around providing searing (pun intended) solos on discs by a large number of R&B singers and vocal groups on a wide variety of labels, including the three mentioned above as well as Atlantic, Baton, Okeh, Savoy, and the stable of imprints owned by Joe Davis. Later, he also founded a small family of labels himself.

Outside of playing, his publishing and promotion business tied in with his own composing and other musical activities. Although he left Freed's band after about a year, he remained on good terms with him, even after his star began to wane. Sears was particularly supportive of Freed because of his stance on integration. Apparently, Freed had been the person originally slated to introduce a new TV program, *American Bandstand*, but lost his chance because of his insistence on using his own orchestra, made up largely of African-American musicians, to accompany the headliners on the show. What eventually appeared on screens was a watered-down "safe" version of what had been intended with no live performances, the singers simply lip-syncing to their own records. Sears continued to support the disc jockey



Alan Freed.

only a limited success, leading him to eventually re-join Ellington in 1955. Incidentally, if Ellington and Sears did have a falling out, it could have resulted from his participation in Hodges' time away from the orchestra. Apparently Duke did not speak to Norman Granz for several years because of his part in the promotion of the breakaway group. Meanwhile, Sears entered the new world of R&B with both feet. Both his booking agency and his music publishing business were heavily involved with developing the new popular sounds.

His exit from the Hodges band did not mean that he stopped playing. *Billboard* announced in October 1951 that King Records had signed Al Sears to the company. This resulted in what, from a strictly jazz point of view, is the most well-known and successful group of recordings. Actually, the announce-

performance with its obvious Ellington reference.

From a strictly jazz point of view, this was almost his last recording session for nearly ten years. Sears' career during the 1950s, ironically his most successful period, took place outside of the mainstream jazz scene. For that reason and for that of space, there is room for only a quick summary. In terms of recording activity, Sears was very busy during the whole of this period both as a leader and a session musician. His solos were an important ingredient in the success of many R&B records of the time.

Rock 'n' Roll

Most important of all, his enduring friendship with Alan Freed meant that he was chosen to be one of the star members of the latter's Rock And Roll Orchestra, which accompanied artists



through the ensuing payola scandal, in which nothing was proved against Freed, and his eventual prosecution for tax evasion.

Sears himself was eventually hired by ABC-Paramount as a record executive and became central in tempting Ray Charles away from Atlantic Records by persuading the former company to offer the singer a deal he could not refuse, allowing him control of his own material and increased royalties.

In the early 1960s, on the back of what was seen as a mainstream revival, Sears temporarily returned to recording jazz. In 1958, he had played a small part in the sessions organized by Stanley Dance for his own Felsted label, returning to playing baritone on the disc put out under Budd Johnson's leadership. However, it was the Prestige label that offered him the most opportunities. Firstly, he accompanied singer Mildred Anderson on her album for Bluesville called *No More In Life*. Then the inauguration of the Swingville series gave Sears several opportunities to play a type of music which he obviously still loved. Although slightly out of practice, he performs well on the three sessions in which he took part. He led one of two groups recorded by Prestige at a festival to spotlight mainstream musicians, where he shared tenor saxophone duties with Buddy Tate as well as being responsible for the arranging.

Then he was given the chance to make his first and only LP as a leader, fronting a quintet made up of Don Ab-

ney, Wally Richardson, Wendell Marshall, and Joe Marshall (*Swing's The Thing*, Prestige Swingville SV 2018, 1960.) On the session, he was able to show he could still shine as a blues player, particularly at medium tempos. He was keen to repay his musical debts whom he felt had influenced him like Herschel Evans, and he also revealed that he still had a more sensitive side to his playing, such as in the out-of-tempo introduction to *Out Of Nowhere*. In the notes on the album cover, he particularly singled out this as something he was proud of. At the same time, he showed his usual streak of depreciation by praising the contemporary jazz experiments of younger players, while pointing to his own relative lack of technique as preventing his own participation.

A final Swingville All-Stars record allowed him a reunion with Ellington bandmate, Taft Jordan, as well as the alto player Hilton Jefferson (*The Swingville All-Stars* SV 2010, 1960.) This, like the disc under his own name, proved to be a happy finale to his playing career, revisiting old favorites like *New Carnegie Blues*.

Conclusion

His final appearance in a recording studio took place in July 1961 when he recorded a new two-part version of *Castle Rock* for the Derrick label. Not long after this, he gradually retired from both his musical and business activities, only appearing as a player on an occasional basis right up to the time of his death in March 1990 from cancer. As can be seen, this was a gap of almost thirty years, during which he was largely forgotten, although he did agree to give interviews during this time, notably to the compilers of the wonderful Bear Family CD that was issued in 1990s (*Seriously* BCD 15668.)

Ironically, although he has been underrated by most writers about jazz and even ignored by the likes of Duke, it was Sears who, with the possible exception of Clark Terry, had by far the most successful career away from the Ellington Orchestra. The comparison with his predecessor, Ben Webster, is particularly revealing. While Webster scuffled for gigs

both in the USA and later when he chose to live Europe, Sears enjoyed success both as a musician and a businessman. Perhaps his modesty was the making of him. He never regarded himself as being in the forefront as an innovator and yet, in his own way, he was.

As Phil Schaap pointed out, Sears' "motto" might well be described as being "Rephrase the beat but don't hurt the swing." It was the emphasis that earned him both the adulation of audiences while with Ellington and his importance to R&B. His other main contribution can be found in the almost unique tonal quality in his playing. Undoubtedly, this is what led Duke to hire him in the first place and is what made him a must-have musician on many later R&B dates. If one examines the work of the many other tenor players who provide the solo interlude on those records, one finds that their sound is largely interchangeable. Not so with "Big" Al. His work is immediately recognizable.



Painting by Ken Daley.

Many people reading this might well remember Churchill's famous put-down to his political rival, Clement Atlee: "A modest man who has much to be modest about." Many will also remember the overwhelming political defeat Churchill suffered at the hands of Atlee in the British general election of 1945. A fitting description of Al Sears might well be provided by turning Churchill's quip on its head: "Al Sears was a modest man with much to be proud about!"

KALLELSE!

Duke Ellington Society of Sweden hälsar sina medlemmar välkomna till medlemsmöte måndagen den 16 september 2019.



PLATS:

Franska Skolans aula,
Döbelnsgatan 3, Stockholm.
Portkod för kvällen: 1609
Entrén öppen från kl. 17.00.
Entréavgift: 100:- i kontanter eller Swish.

PROGRAM:

17.30-18.30 – DESS-medlemmen **Anders Lindgren** kan sin Duke Ellington. Han är tillika kapellmästare för JazzMaTazz, som vi avnjöt vid vårt föregående medlemsmöte, så vi vet att han känner till det mesta om Ellingtons musik. Han kåserar i kväll på ämnet **Duke Ellingtons 1930-tal**. En fin period i Duke Ellingtons karriär då många av hans stora verk skapades.

18.30-19.00 – **PAUS** med möjlighet till mingel och inköp av öl/vin och baguetter. Obs! Endast kontanter eller Swish.

19.00-20.15 – Denna kväll gästas DESS av **Peter Asplund**. Peter behöver ingen närmare presentation. Han är en av landets mest framstående trumpetare och vi ser fram emot hans framträdande. Han kompas av Claes Crona, piano, Hans Andersson, bas, och Johan Löfcrantz Ramsay, trummor.

Tidsangivelserna är ungefärliga.

NÄSTA MEDLEMSMÖTE:

Är planerat till den 25 november då vi kommer vi få lyssna på Jesse Lindgren och hans New Orleans Jazz Band plus ett kåseri av Göran Wallén och Bo Haufman om The Broonze Buckaroo, d.v.s. Herb Jeffries. Reservera dagen i era kalendrar.

Duke Ellington Society of Sweden, DESS

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DESS

c/o Leif Jönsson
Anbudsvägen 15, 187 50 TÄBY
08-510 503 14, 0706-22 88 16
leif.jonsson14@comhem.se

Styrelse

Leif Jönsson, Bo Haufman, Anders Asplund, Peter Lee, Göran Wallén, Lars Björkman, Claes Brodda

Redaktionsgrupp

Bo Haufman, Thomas Harne, Lars Björkman, Claes Brodda, Andreas Andersson (layout)

Hemsida

www.ellington.se

Facebook

Duke Ellington Society of Sweden

E-postadress

ellington.sweden@telia.com

Bankgiro

211-3207

PayPal account

ellington.sweden@telia.com

International bank account

IBAN: SE95 6000 0000 0002 8408 3992

BIC: HANDSESS

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