



Foto: Leif Wigh

Duke Ellington´s reluctant trombonist

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Chansningen gick hem!

Vårt senaste medlemsmöte var till vissa delar en ekonomisk chansning, men vi kan nu konstatera att den chansningen gick hem. Vi tvekade aldrig om kvaliteten på utbudet, men om ekonomin var vi osäkra. Vi hade bestämt att höja kvaliteten på vårt musikaliska utbud. Därmed inte sagt att det vi erbjudit tidigare varit på något sätt undermåligt. Men faktum är ändå att vissa namn kräver en högre ersättning. Nu hade vi engagerat två erkänt bra namn, Kjell Fernström och Mårten Lundgren. Ingen av dom är boende i Stockholm, men hade gjort sig besväret att resa från Enköping respektive Malmö för att uppträda inför våra medlemmar. Risken vi tog var att somliga medlemmar skulle tycka det något torftigt med enbart piano och trumpet utan komp. Dessutom såg vi oss tvingade att höja entréavgiften, vilket kanske skulle få en eller annan att avstå från evenemanget. Som framgår av recension på annan plats i denna Bulletin var kvällen lyckad och det ekonomiska resultatet innebar en mindre vinst.

När jag ändå är inne på ämnet ekonomi kan jag med glädje konstatera att en mycket stor andel av våra medlemmar har betalat medlemsavgiften för året. Det tackar jag för. Nu återstår bara ett 30-tal medlemmar att kräva och de som inte



betalat före april månad tvingas jag stryka ur medlemsförteckningen. Det kostar oss för mycket att trycka upp och skicka ut Bulletinen till de som inte har betalat.

Årsmötet förlöpte utan komplikationer. Styrelsen är nu decimerad med en man eftersom Bo Holmqvist valt att lämna styrelsen. Valberedningen fick i uppdrag att leta fram en ersättare, men de tillfrågade visade dessvärre inte intresse. Samtidigt kunde vi i styrelsen ändå konstatera att de återstående sju styrel-

semedlemmarna är fullt kapabla att hantera föreningens angelägenheter och det bestämdes därför att någon ersättare till Bo inte behövdes. Jag hade nöjet att få avtacka Bo för hans produktiva år i styrelsen med en flaska Grönstedts VSOP Cognac, för oss äldre generationer mera känd som Grönstedts Monopol, som jag vet att Bosse uppskattar. Jag vet att Bosse har en utsökt god smak, inte enbart när det gäller musik. Därför fick han denna flaska, som trots den numera otroligt fula etiketten inte har med vårt tidigare svenska Vin & Sprit att göra. Jag rekommenderar därför Bosse att göra som jag, hålla upp cognacen i en karaff och klistra på den gamla etiketten. Då kan man glädjas mera av denna förtjusande cognac.

Nästa medlemsmöte är bestämt till den 27 april och jag ber er alla observera att detta är en torsdag. Anledningen till byte av veckodag är att Franska Skolan har öppet hus just måndagen i den veckan och vi kunde inte få tillgång till någon annan dag. Vi är inte den enda organisation som nyttjar Franska Skolans aula. Ni är alla hjärtligt välkomna.

Leif Jönsson, ordförande i DESS

Comments about Arthur Whetsel

In our Bulletin 4/2016 we featured Arthur Whetsel, which seems to have been appreciated by our readers. Ted Hudson, Washington, D.C., former president of TDES Washington chapter and deeply knowledgeable about Duke Ellington, mailed us the following comments:

"In your excellent article on Arthur Whetsel you mention that after the death of his father his mother married a Rev. Charles N. Scheafe, or Schiefe. Further, you say that when Arthur was in his teens the family moved to Washington, where he connected with Duke.

In a current internet site that lists Washington, DC residents, there are no persons with the last name of Sheafe/Schiefe, but there are three persons with the last name of Shief. For a while I was by marriage

distantly related to these three Washington-based Shiefs. One that I have known for some years had the last name Shief before she married. I asked her if she had ever heard of a musician named Sheafe or Schiefe. She does not remember hearing of any Shiefs outside of her family. She is interested, however, in learning something about this Sheafe/Schiefe named Arthur Whetsel who had played in Duke's band, so I made a copy of your fine article for her to show to members of her family. If anything further develops I will let you know."

We are grateful for comments of this sort and maybe we will thru Ted's relatives get to know something more about Arthur Whetsel.

DESS

Rättelse

Det är en konst att kunna läsa korrektur. Vi i redaktionen läser alla manus noggrant innan de skall gå i tryck. Men när man läser texterna tycks en psykologisk effekt göra sig märkbar. Man läser texten och väntar sig att det skall stå skrivet på ett visst sätt och hjärnan noterar inte att det i realiteten står något annat. Beklagligtvis har vi kunnat notera att detta fenomen har inträffat ett flertal gånger. I vårt förra nummer av Bulletinen har ett mycket uppseendeväckande fel insmugit sig. Artikeln om Otto Hardwick inleds med den felaktiga uppgiften att han var född den 25 maj 1917. Han var i realiteten född den 31 maj 1904. Hur det felaktiga födelsedatumet kom in i texten har vi ingen förklaring till. Det är beklagligt med tyckfel.

Redaktionen

Glatt årsmöte och uppskattad musik

DESS ordförande Leif Jönsson inledde det ordinarie årsmötet med att presentera styrelsens val av hedersmedlem, nämligen föreningens förre ordförande Jan Falk. Styrelsens beslut var enhälligt, vilket också applåderades av kvällens deltagare. Se särskild rapport om detta på annan plats i denna Bulletin.

Leif vände sig därefter till Bo Holmqvist och tackade honom för ett mångårigt och omfattande styrelsearbete och kunde med glädje överlämna en flytande gåva. I sitt tacktal betonade Bo glädjen att ha fått arbeta i styrelsen med dess mångsidiga problem och glädjeämnen. Dock höll han med ordföranden om att etiketten på flaskan var anskrämlig!

Årsmötet blev ett snabbt och glatt inslag i sammankomsten, mycket tack vare Håkan Skytts snabba och ekvilibristiska klubbteknik. Från paragraferna kan nämnas att medlemsantalet den 13

februari uppgick till 205 betalande personer, men att kassören förväntade sig ytterligare inbetalningar för att nå upp till de cirka 230 medlemmar föreningen har.



Man beslutade också att ge styrelsen rätt att höja medlemsavgiften för 2018 från 250 till 300 kronor om behov skulle uppstå. Årets underskott på drygt 10 000 kr föreslogs balanseras i ny räkning. Valberedningens förslag till styrelseledamöter och revisorer blev i samtliga fall omvalda.

Anders Asplunds stora förmåga att

leta upp filmer med jazzmusik från skilda tidsperioder på Nätet är omvitnad. Under kvällen fick vi se och lyssna till inte bara Duke Ellingtons orkester 1963 utan också Count Basies 1962 och Woody Hermans 1964. Urvalet av orkestrar och musik blev mycket uppskattat.

Konsertpersonligheterna kom denna gång från både Enköping och Malmö och hade glädjande nog lockat lite fler medlemmar än vanligt. Kjell Fernström, piano och Mårten Lundgren, trumpet, rev ner åtskilliga applåder under kvällen. Duon inledde framförandet med bl a *Take the "A" Train*, *I got it bad*, och därefter *Daydream*. I det medley som sedan följde ingick *Concerto for Cootie*, *Satin Doll* och Povel Ramels sällan hörda *Om det regnar på vår kärlek*. Mårtens lyriska ådra och skickliga sordinspel, som även omfattade wawa-teknik, firade stora triumfer. Kjell Fernströms kraftfulla pianoimprovisationer och intelligenta uppbackning av Mårten var hela tiden intressant att lyssna till i denna ovanliga orkestersammansättning. De bådas opretentiösa mellansnack gladdade också publiken. Konserten avslutades med *Embraceable you*, *Stardust* i dubbeltempo, *A Beautiful Friendship* och *Tea for Two*.

Thomas Harne

Jan Falk appointed Honorary Member.

Just in time for his 75th birthday on March 3 our former President of Duke Ellington Society of Sweden (DESS), Jan Falk, has been appointed Honorary Member of our Society. The Board's decision was unanimous.



My first meeting with Jan occurred sometime in the autumn of 2002 or early 2003. He was at that time Vice President and I was elected Secretary at the Annual Meeting in 2003. In those days the meetings were held in Jan's office in Stockholm and Göran Wallén was the President of DESS. Much of the Board's activity this year was concentrated on the preparations for the Duke Ellington Conference in 2004 which became a huge success.

Jan was elected new President in 2005 and up to his resignation in 2011 he managed the business of our Society in a successful way. The number of members rose and at our member meetings in the

concert hall of SAMI (Swedish Artists and Musicians Interest Organization) in Stockholm people came flocking, thanks to his generous sponsorship of fine orchestras. He managed to record several of the concerts, which eventually resulted in DESS' first CD presented as

ECHOES OF DUKE Live from Duke Ellington Society of Sweden. Jan was the driving force behind the CD.

In 2010 Jan convinced the Board to move the Society meetings to the former well known jazz club Gyllene Cirkeln (The Golden Circle). Several fine orchestras were engaged there over the first three years and the meetings were many times crowded. But the economic demands from the managers of the place gradually became exaggerated and we had to give up our member meetings there and we returned to SAMI.

Jan Falk decided to resign as Chairman in 2011. All board members who served

under Jan for 10 years or more, are grateful for the responsibility Jan took as Chairman. As such he led the activity of our Society with great commitment. We congratulate him to have been appointed Honorary Member of Duke Ellington Society of Sweden. The decision was announced at the Annual Meeting February 13, 2017. When talking to Jan at the Annual Meeting he expressed his appreciation of having been appointed Honorary Member of DESS.

Leif Jönsson

Chairman of the Board

TYRCKFEL

För att i någon mån förbättra vår korrekturläsning har vi beslutat att utöka antalet medlemmar i redaktionen. Lars Björkman, medlem i DESS styrelse, tar nu också en position i redaktionen. Därmed hoppas vi kunna minimera antalet tryckfel, men att bli helt befriad från sådana är kanske en utopi?

Redaktionen

Lawrence Brown

by Steve Voce

This profile was originally published in the April 2015 issue of the UK publication, Jazz Journal.

It is with kind permission of Steve Voce and Jazz Journal (jazzjournal.co.uk) that we reprint the article here:

Lawrence Brown, the most majestic and at the same time the most gutbucket of the top rank of trombonists, became a giant on the instrument and hero to the multitude of jazz trombonists who subsequently absorbed his influence.

When Brown joined the Duke Ellington Orchestra in 1932, he changed not only Ellington's music, but the whole approach to jazz trombone playing. Until his appearance only a few trombonists, like Jimmy Harrison, Jack Teagarden and J. C. Higginbotham, had managed to break free from the circus-type noises which had been accepted as the horn's metier. These three had given the trombone a new eloquence and had dispensed with the very basic role developed for the instrument by the earlier New Orleans players like Kid Ory and Honore Dutrey. Brown brought to the instrument another kind of eloquence, based on a sweetness and purity of tone which he introduced to jazz. Later, too, he became one of the best blues players on his instrument.

Born in Lawrence, Kansas, on 3 August 1907, Lawrence was given a strict upbringing by his father, a church minister. Lawrence studied music and medicine at Pasadena Junior College but left in 1927 to become a professional musician. His father was furious about this. "Either behave yourself and quit disgracing me, or get out!" Lawrence got out. His father was convinced that he would end up in jail.

Whilst still a young man Lawrence had mastered several instruments – piano, tuba, violin and saxophone. Duke Ellington recalled him as being a gifted violinist in his early days, playing romantic music as he wandered from table to table serenading the diners in a Los Angeles restaurant.

He tried to model his trombone sound on that of the cello. "It was my own idea" he said. "Why can't you play the melody on the trombone just as sweet as on the



cello? I wanted a big, broad tone, not the raspy tone of tailgate."

A trombone solo Brown played on a 1926 broadcast from Pasadena was heard by the evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson, and led to his playing in her Los Angeles temple. "After I began playing professionally," Lawrence said, "the musician I liked was Miff Mole. His work was very artistic and technical. To get the smoothness I wanted, I tried to round the tone too much, instead of keeping it thin. Mine, to my regret, has become too smooth."

He worked with local bands and in 1929 he recorded half a dozen sides with Paul Howard's Quality Serenaders and he was soon swept into the house band that backed Louis Armstrong at the Los Angeles Cotton Club.

"Louis was the only musician who

ever influenced me," said Lawrence. "I think the two greatest influences in the music of this century were Armstrong for his melodic style and Paul Whiteman for making a complete change in band style away from the symphony and the dance band."

Brown remained in Louis's backing band at the club until Lawrence had an argument with Armstrong's manager, who had called a rehearsal for Easter Sunday. Lawrence had visited his parents every Sunday, refused to change, and so he left the band.

The Ellington band was in town, and Irving Mills, who heard Lawrence playing at the western Cotton Club in the spring of 1932, drew Duke's attention to the stentorian trombonist. Mills took Ellington to listen, and shortly afterwards Duke asked Lawrence to join his band. Lawrence stayed for 19 years this first time.

Brown brought a richness to the trombone section that contrasted with the primitive growls of Tricky Sam, and Lawrence soon became a section leader who inspired devotion from the Duke's trombonists for almost 40 years. But in the early days his was regarded as a controversial voice in the band. The entrepreneur John Hammond loved giving advice (when Rex Stewart chose not to take some of it, Rex claimed that Hammond had Rex's career impaired. I think the phrase that Rex used when telling me this was "black-listed"). Hammond said of Brown: "He is a soloist who doesn't respect the rudiments of orchestral playing. Constantly he pushes himself to the foreground. In any other orchestra no objection would be raised. But Duke's group is very properly the voice of one man and that gent is not Mr Brown."

During the British tour by the Ellington band in June and July 1933, English fans were outraged when Lawrence played his instrumental version of *Trees*. This was an early example of jazz ballad playing, and the audiences weren't ready for it, raised as they were on stomps of Bigard and Hodges and the growls of Tricky Sam and Cootie. On the other hand Lawrence's major impact on the music fraternity was in the speed and accuracy of his playing, rather than the more languorous stuff.

The band recorded the first version of *Sophisticated Lady* in September 1932. It's a song that appears to have been written partly by Lawrence and partly by Otto

Hardwick. It became an eminent piece in the Ellington library, with Duke taking credit as its composer.

In conversation with Patricia Willard, who was always closer to the Ellingtonians than most other band associates, Lawrence said: "I got the terrific cheque of \$15 for writing *Sophisticated Lady*." "Have you ever gotten composer credits," Patricia asked. "No, no. That cheque cancels you out," said Lawrence. "You never knew when you had a good coming number on your hands. So in fact we didn't even care. We were just doing something that we wanted to do."

Cootie Williams was more explicit. "No. He had bought the song. All of us used to sell songs to him for \$25. Some of the fellows in later years, they sued him. But I didn't do it. No. I believed in if I sold a person something and he paid for it, I didn't believe in going back, you know, and saying I didn't mean it that way. So I let it go. It was fun then you know. I got a lot of experience doing things like that. And it was a pleasure, you know, to have the band play back your song."

Lawrence told Patricia Willard "I played a solo on *Once in A While* and Johnny Hodges with his little inventive self was always inventing something. Always giving something to somebody. He come up on *I Let A Song*. That's an obligato of the melody of *Once In A While*. And what's that other tune? *Don't Get Around Much Anymore*. Johnny Hodges, that's another one of the fellows that never received near what he should have."

The Ellington band was famous for its feuds, which lasted over many years. Lawrence had two significant ones, rarely speaking to Barney Bigard or, after the late '30s, to Ellington himself, except when he had to sort out his parts in the music. He thought Ellington was an egomaniac. "An exploiter of men," he told Mark Tucker. He described the Ellington manager Irving Mills as "a skunk of the lowest order" and a "con bastard." He despised Ellington's attitude to money and what he saw as Duke's financial exploitation of his musicians. A major friction over the years was Ellington's association with the actress Fredi Washington at a time when Lawrence was briefly married to her in the late '30s.

If it is accepted that Lawrence once, during a performance, chased Cat Anderson across the stage in front of the assembled audience, then we can as-

sume that he didn't get on too well with the trumpeter, either. On the other hand he remained close friends with Johnny Hodges, Rex Stewart and Juan Tizol over the years.

Rex, always a sensitive judge of character, gave a vibrant description of Lawrence: "He was a handsome man, always immaculately dressed. And his personal life bore no relation to the image his horn conveyed. He neither drank nor smoked, he used neither slang nor profanity; and he seldom bothered to smile. That's the Lawrence Brown we used to call 'Rev'." (Lawrence's other nickname was The Deacon).

Tricky Sam with his double muted style was a major part of the Ellington arsenal, and when he died on 20 July 1946, Duke sought out successors in the style. They included Tyree Glenn (Duke's favourite of all the plunger wielders), Quentin Jackson and Booty Wood. Eventually, when Lawrence rejoined the band in May 1960, and Booty Wood left in October that year, Duke called on Lawrence to take over Tricky's role. Brown's trombone depended on a precisely blown and delicate lip technique. He hated Duke even more for making him take up Tricky's style and always maintained that he'd destroyed his embouchure by making these unorthodox demands on his lip. The buzz mute and plunger tended to make the playing sharp or flat.

When, in 1951, Duke finally stood up to Johnny Hodges demands for more money and refused him, Johnny left, taking drummer Sonny Greer and Lawrence Brown with him to form his own small band. The Hodges band was very successful and Lawrence's bucketing blues playing matched the powerful solos of the leader for drive and swing. Brown stayed with the band until it broke up in 1955.

Jobs in the recording studios of New York, although boring, were very well paid and extremely hard to get. On leaving Hodges, Lawrence was lucky to take over trombonist Warren Covington's post in the studios of the Columbia Broadcasting System when Warren resigned. At first Lawrence loved the work, particularly since it meant that he could take jazz jobs in the evenings.

"There's a peculiar thing about studio musicians," said Lawrence. "They all sound alike. They're great musicians and any one can sit in another's chair and it doesn't change a thing at all. My sound was too individual, and I couldn't

suppress it properly." Eventually the boredom persuaded him to resign. He received another call from Ellington, and went back into the band in 1960.

He remained a melancholy man, unconvinced of his talents as a jazz musician. "I can't play jazz like the other guys in the band," he told me. "All the others can improvise good solos without a second thought. I'm not a good improviser." He was totally wrong in this assessment, as innumerable jam session recordings prove.

Lawrence finally retired in 1970 with the typically morose remark: "You have to realise that being popular is nowadays more important than producing anything of value." His retirement was not voluntary. After more than 30 years of fury with Ellington things had finally come to a climax and the two men had had a fight in a European airport. Ellington knocked out two of Brown's front teeth and he was never able to play again.

During the Seventies, he worked in a business consultancy and took part in Richard Nixon's presidential campaign. Before his final retirement, he took up a post with the Hollywood branch of the American musicians' union.

Several attempts were made by people to persuade Lawrence to take up the trombone again after he left Ellington. "When I finally left Duke," he said, "I called to see my second wife in Cleveland on my way back home to California. I left my trombone behind her rocking chair. As far as I know, it's still there. It can stay there."

Mark Tucker tracked Lawrence down in the spring of 1985 when the trombonist was living with his brother Harold in a less prosperous part of Los Angeles. Mark described him as being gloomy and bitter, two qualities that I had myself found earlier in the trombonist over the years.

He died in Los Angeles on 5 September 1988.

(Vad det gäller uppgiften i artikeln ovan om att Sophisticated Lady spelade in första gången i september 1932 så var datumet den 21 i månaden då numret spelades in för RCA-Victor, men bolaget brydde sig inte om att ge ut inspelningen. Den 15 februari 1933 spelades numret in i New York för engelska Columbia och kom alltså europeiska skivköpare till del före de amerikanska. Den amerikanska publiken fick vänta tills Brunswickinspelningen från den 16 maj 1933 kom ut på marknaden. – Red.)

Min syn på Lawrence Browns liv och karriär

Jag har läst det mesta som skrivits i bokform om Duke Ellington och i och med det får man också inhämta en hel del information om människorna runt Duke Ellington och då i synnerhet hans medmusikanter. Alla dessa musiker tycks vara personligheter som njöt av sitt liv som musiker och särskilt uppskattade att spela med Duke Ellington. De flesta av dem hade någon form av smeknamn, som i många fall kom att uppfattas som deras egentliga namn, t.ex. Bubber, Cootie, Toby, Shorty, Cadillac m.fl. Lawrence Brown tilldelades aldrig något smeknamn.



Han omnämns ibland som "The Dean", men det var aldrig något tilltalsnamn. Namnet kan översättas till "Prosten" och det var kanske så många såg honom. I arkiven hittar man mängder av bilder på Lawrence Brown, men jag har aldrig hittat någon bild där han ser glad ut. Inte ens så mycket som ett leende kan jag erinra mig att jag sett. Men säkert finns det sådana bilder. Rex Stewart har dock bekräftat att han sällan såg honom le eller skratta. Lawrence Brown är för mig ett psykologiskt mysterium. Det vilar något av tragik över hans liv och karriär. Han var en renlevnadsman. Han drack inte och rökte inte. När de övriga i bandet drack sprit och kanske även rökte marijuana drack Brown CocaCola. Barney Bigard beskrev honom som "grumpy" i betydelsen vresig och butter. Under resorna fördrevs ofta tiden med kortspel och det existerar faktiskt en bild där man kan se Brown delta i spelet trots att det påstås att han aldrig spelade kort.

Stanley Dance har i sin bok "The World of Duke Ellington" (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York) ett längre kapitel om Lawrence Brown som baseras på en intervju. Kapitlet beskriver Browns karriär, men ett avsnitt avslöjar hur Brown såg på musiken i den amerikanska underhållningsindustrin: "When I was attracted to music in the beginning there were no commercial challenges and I played

as I felt. Then I got deeper into it and found out it was a business, and the rotten business, and I resented that. I got disgusted and music has come to mean nothing but a job to me." Hårda ord från en uppskattad jazzmusiker, men uppenbarligen från en luttrad man.

Trots sin musikaliska kapacitet mötte han olika motgångar i livet och han verkar aldrig ha varit helt nöjd med sin situation. Mycket av detta missnöje bottnade säkerligen i hans egen karaktär men yttre omständigheter spelade också in. Efter att ha försökt smälta allt som skrivits om Brown ställer man sig frågan om han var en lycklig människa. Man har anledning tvivla.

Lawrence Brown engagerades av Ellington 1932. Irving Mills påstår att det var han som gjorde Ellington uppmärksam på Browns existens och kapacitet. Ellington lär ha hälsat Brown med orden: "I never knew you, I never met you, I never heard you. But Irving says get you, so that's that." Kanske inte den bästa starten i bandet. Många kritiker var tveksamma till Browns inträde i orkestern och menade att hans stil inte passade Ellington. Men fel hade dom. Tillsammans med Joe Nanton och Juan Tizol bildade Brown en trombontrio som gått till historien. Ellington utnyttjade omgående Brown som solist och ny färgklick på sin musikaliska palett. Men det ver-

kar som att det ganska snart utvecklades en osämja mellan de båda. Roten till denna misshällighet torde vara en kvinna vid namn Fredi Washington. Hon var dansös på Cotton Club och medverkade i filmen *Black And Tan* som Ellington spelade in 1929. Brown och Fredi Washington gifte sig 1933 men skildes några år senare. Brown skyllde detta äktenskapliga misslyckande på Ellington. Tydligt hade Washington och Ellington haft en relation före äktenskapets ingående och Brown har antytt att Ellington upprätthöll denna relation även efter giftermålet. Det har även påståtts att Washington ingick äktenskapet med Brown enbart för att göra Ellington svartsjuk. Det misslyckade äktenskapet torde utgöra grunden för missämjan mellan Brown och Ellington, men fler anledningar fanns.

Det är ett känt faktum att Ellington använde sig av musikaliska idéer skapade av hans orkestermedlemmar. Han utvecklade idéerna och uppgav sedan sitt eget namn som kompositör. Ofta tillsammans med Irving Mills. Johnny Hodges och Cootie Williams blev i hög grad utnyttjade på detta sätt. Lawrence Brown har antytt att det var hans musikaliska idé som låg till grund för *Sophisticated Lady* men att han aldrig fick något erkännande för detta. När Columbia gav ut *Sophisticated Lady* var Lawrence Brown, Otto Hardwick och Duke Ellington angivna som kompositörer, viket de rätteligen var. Men senare utgåvor visade Ellington som ensam kompositör. Anledningen sägs vara att Ellington köpte ut Brown och Hardwick för att senare kunna skylta som ensam kompositör. Lawrence Brown har senare uttryckt sig mycket kritiskt om Ellingtons kapacitet som kompositör och beskrivit honom som "compiler" i stället för "composer".

Vi betraktar Lawrence Brown som en av jazzens förnämsta trombonister, men Brown själv var aldrig helt nöjd med sina prestationer. Han såg sig inte själv som en improvisatör och säger själv att hans solon alltid var förhandspreparerade. Det ligger säkert ett stort mått av sanning i detta, för faktum är att han som re-

gel spelar sina solon nästan identiskt lika som t. ex. i *Rose of the Rio Grande*. Men i ärlighetens namn skall sägas att det var något som han inte var ensam om. Publiken väntade sig att ett känt solo skulle spelas på samma sätt som det gjordes på skiva. Lawrence Browns solon från mitten av 1930-talet är fyllda av en entusiasm för att inte säga glädje. Hans soloframträdanden från slutet 1940-talet och hans andra sejour i bandet är alla superba och vackra, men de saknar den entusiasm och snärtighet som kännetecknade hans tidigaste framträdanden.

Trots friktionen med Ellington stannade Brown kvar i orkestern. En anledning kan ha varit att nöjesindustrin i USA kände av 1930-talets depression. Arbets-tillfällena för musiker hade minskat och det kan ha bidragit till att Brown tvingades bita i det sura äpplet och stanna kvar i orkestern, där han ju trots allt hade en förhållandevis god lön. Han var inte heller den typ av musiker som hade ambitionen att leda en egen orkester.

Brown stannade kvar i orkestern ända fram till 1951. Då kom Norman Granz in som en räddande ängel. Han lockade bort Johnny Hodges, Sonny Greer och Lawrence Brown från Ellington för att lansera dom i en mindre grupp under Hodges ledning. Hodges hade uppenbarligen önskemål om bättre ekonomisk ersättning, vilket han tydligen nu kunde få. Sonny Greer hade vissa problem med alkoholen och Ellington fick ofta kalla in

ersättare för honom och Brown såg troligen Granz erbjudande som en möjlighet att få lämna Ellington utan någon större ekonomisk uppoffring.

Lawrence Brown spelade i Hodges band några år, men när Hodges lade ner bandet och återvände till fadershuset fick Brown ett engagemang i CBS studioorkester i New York. En attraktiv syssla för många jazzmusiker, som i princip innebar ett 9-5 jobb och därmed gav möjlighet att spela med andra band på kvällstid. I Leif Andersons intervju får vi veta mer om detta och anledningen till att det engagemanget upphörde.

I maj 1960 blev Brown återanställd av Ellington. I skenet av vad som tidigare hänt undrar man varför Brown åtog sig arbetet. Kan det ha varit en säker inkomstkälla som var avgörande? Kunde han inte ha fått ett motsvarande jobb hos någon av de andra storbandsledarna? Frågorna är många. När Booty Wood lämnade orkestern i december 1960 fanns ingen självklar efterträdare som growltrombonist. Ellington försökte med Matthew Gee, Louis Blackburn och Leon Cox, men ingen av dem levde upp till Ellingtons krav. Han vände sig då till Brown, som till slut tog på sig rollen som growltrombonist av typ Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton. Skall man tro att Ellington fick betala ett pris för detta? Lawrence Brown hade fram till dess i hela sin karriär spelat öppen trombon med Tommy Dorsey som förebild. Nu måste han

ikläda sig den ovana rollen som wa-wa-trombonist. Det visar sig att han klarar den rollen mycket bra, men själv var han aldrig nöjd med den. Han menade att det nya spelsättet påverkade hans embochure, dvs läpparnas styrka och smidighet, och försämrade hans förmåga att spela traditionell trombon. Men om man lyssnar på hans ofta framförda *Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me* och t.ex. *Minnie The Moocher* från Atlantic-LPn "Recollections of the Big Band Era" inser man vilken fantastisk trombonist Lawrence Brown var även inom detta gebit.

De personliga antipatierna mellan Brown och Ellington tycks dock inte ha lagt sig och katastrofen inträffade 1970. Det påstås att de båda råkade i dispyt och Ellington lär ha blivit så uppretad att han utdelade ett kraftigt slag som slog ut två framtänder på Brown och omöjliggjorde allt framtida spelande. Incidenten är omnämnd i flera böcker. Med vetskap om vad Ellington var för sorts människa har man svårt att ta till sig denna händelse. Om det är en skröna eller ej försöker Roger Boyes utreda i sin artikel "Two Front Teeth" i denna Bulletin.

Sista dagen för Lawrence Brown i Ellingtons band är den 7 januari 1970 då man spelar in ett antal nummer för Fantasy Records. Bl.a. spelas bluesen *Tippytoeing Through The Jungle Garden* där Brown spelar ett solo över två korus. Han spelar självklart vackert men utan entusiasm. Dagen efter påbörjar orkestern en längre turné till Fjärran Östern och Australien. Flera trotjänare väljer att inte följa med och så även Lawrence Brown. I och med detta steg lämnar han musiken för gott. Inspelningar för Fantasy är de sista han gör i sin musikaliska karriär.

För att ytterligare spegla Lawrence Browns karriär återges Steve Voces mycket insiktsfulla levnadsbeskrivning över Lawrence Brown, och Leif "Smoke Rings" Andersons intervju ger ytterligare en bild av en jazzens stora trombonister. I Benny Åslunds efterlämnade samlingar har vi även funnit ett brev som Brown skrev till Al Hibbler, vilket likaledes återges här. Brevet ger en bild av en luttrad man som tycks framleva sitt liv under relativt knappa omständigheter.

Enligt vissa uppgifter skall Lawrence Brown 1980 ha medverkat i en känd film – *The Competition* – men i vilken kapacitet är inte känt.



Runt spelbordet: Al Sears, Shelton Hemphill, Junior Raglin, Django Reinhardt, Lawrence Brown, Harry Carney och Johnny Hodges.

Bo Hauffman

Leif "Smoke Rings" Anderson interviewing Lawrence Brown

On February 7, 1963, Duke Ellington and his Orchestra performed in Swedish TV and while they were rehearsing for the show the most popular Swedish Ellingtonfan, Leif "Smoke Rings" Anderson, had a chat with Lawrence Brown. When listening to the interview one is struck by Lawrence Brown's very sonorous and beautiful voice, almost as beautiful as his trombone sound. Here follows their conversation:

Leif Anderson: Glad to have you here Lawrence.

Lawrence Brown: I'm very glad to be here in Sweden again.

LA: It's been a long time.

LB: Well, I was over a couple of years ago with Johnny Hodges.

LA: Oh, yes. The Ellington All Stars.

LB: Yes, a few days.

LA: You were away for several years but when did you get back to Duke to play permanently?

LB: Well, I came back about the first part of June 1960.

LA: So you've been back almost three years now.

LB: Almost three years, yes.

LA: I've been watching the band for several days now on your Scandinavian tour. How can you stand this pace? Is it love of music or is it the good physical stamina that is the main thing to have?

LB: Well I would say it is mostly getting used to routines. We do the same things in the States.

LA: All the time?

LB: One-nighters and moving all the time and you finally get sort of used to it, although it's very hard and I would say that it cuts your efficiency down quite a bit. You are not capable when you have to strain all the time. Every once in a while we'll have to stop and ask what do we do. Because no day is any different, any hour is any different. Naturally we lose track.

LA: When you were away from the band, what did you do then?

LB: Well, the first part, I was away almost ten years, and the first four years or so I went with Johnny Hodges and his small group. We had a little group about seven pieces and I went with him and then I left there and I stayed in New York and played two or three shows on Broadway for a while and then I went into CBS staff for about four years and a half.

LA: At that time you didn't travel much. You were located in New York all the time.

LB: Not in the last five or six years.

LA: How come you did go back?

LB: Well, you see they have what they call efficiency experts in the studios. At that particular time most of the shows were changing over from live music to tapes and in taping you don't need nearly the number of men. In a live show one man can only do one show a day. When taping, one man can tape one show in the morning and tape another show in the afternoon and different things like that. It is an efficiency mood.

LA: Being away for a so long time, was it hard to adjust yourself to going back?

LB: No, no I've. On the road?

LA: Yes

LB: Yes, it was very hard adjusting back to the routine of the road. Yet the road has sort of a romantic atmosphere also. The changing of towns and meeting of old friends that you know all over the country. Getting around to see them eve-

ry once in a while is a sort of a pleasure.

LA: The other boys in the band, the old ones, I think they feel much the same as you do about meeting old friends.

LB: Yes, that is one part, but as far as the band is concerned you see they are much older now. And the things that didn't bother you when you were young seem to bother you now. Such things as having to ride in busses seven or eight hours, hundreds of miles and staying up all hours, it's sort of makes you feel a little bit different now.

LA: But you still look much the same as you did in 1939.

LB: Oh, that's make up.

LA: Well, Lawrence, knowing how much you have to do we won't keep you longer. We thank you so much and hope we will see you soon back in Sweden again.

LB: Thank you very much and I love coming to Sweden. A very wonderful country. Thanks all of you.

LA: Let's hope we'll have some better weather next time.

LB: Oh, well, we have the same thing in New York so I can't complain. We can't do anything about that.

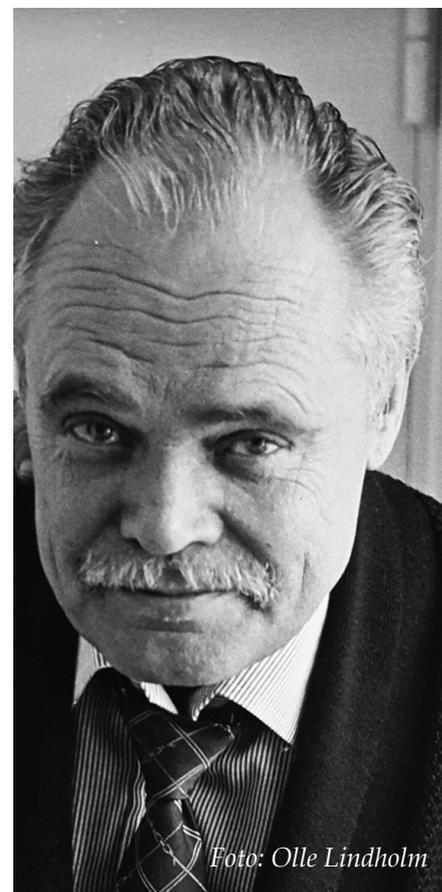


Foto: Olle Lindholm

Lawrence Brown's letter

Some of the late Benny Åslund's archives are in the hands of DESS and when going thru them an interesting letter was found. It is a letter written by Lawrence Brown addressed to Al Hibbler. It is not dated, but the contents make us believe it was written during the early part of the 1980s. Lawrence Brown left the Ellington orchestra in January 1979 and never to play his trombone again. He then worked as a business consultant before taking up a job with the Musicians Union in Los Angeles. He passed away in 1988. The letter below is rewritten exactly as written by Brown:

Dear Mr. Hibbler:

Greetings and salutations, and a million thanks for those wonderful tapes that you sent me!

I must apologize for not answering before now, but since I am no longer working at the Union, I don't have access to the people that had the recording equipment. I guess I had better explain a little clearer.

Up until about a year ago, I was employed as a recording agent, and my job was to go around to the various studios and see that the sessions were being run according to Union rules. I developed this Hip ailment the result was I finally had to have a operation of a Hip-replacement. This, together with Hernias and Prostate, made me have three operations and all on the right side, and they did them all behind each other.

The result was, it all left me unable to get around, in and out of my car, so I was unable to continue my work; I had to semi-retire. Time for healing etc. has so far kept me from working, and at the same time conditions in Union work has

become so bad and dangerous that I just gave it all up!

I did not have a reel-to-reel tape player; the only person that had one that I could use, was my cousin, and he lives in Pasadena. Then the Gas situation fixed it so that doing a lot of traveling has been uncertain. Therefore I have only heard the Tapes once, and when I did hear them I was elated!

The tapes of the broadcast was great! It contained some numbers that I have been looking for for some time! That speedy number was the one we played all thru the Near-east trip. I hadn't heard it since the trip! That ad-lib solo I played on the first part of the tape was my version of *Creole Rhapsody*.

You must remember that we did many, many recording sessions, and many times we went into the studio unprepared and without enough pieces to fill out the session; therefore we would make up numbers right on the spur of the moment. We would take a theme, play it for eight bars, repeat it, then put some sort of middle, then repeat the first eight bars,

then the men would take choruses, and back to the original strain. This constituted a new piece; send it in to the office, they would put a title on it, and so a new hit is born!

The idea I'm trying to convey is this is the way that too many of the tunes were done, and when we would hear them later, we couldn't even remember the origin or the name! That is what happened in the last part of that tape! I have no way of knowing what those tunes were, because as I told you, I have very few records, and it has now been many years ago that we played the tunes.

I hear that there are a great number of re-editions of most of the music we made. I haven't had any interest in these things because the "Head men" in these affairs had the contracts drawn up so that the men got nothing from the fruits of their labor, and it all goes in the pockets of those in the office.

As you probably know, our number has dwindled to a very, very few. I never contact anyone except those that are living here in L.A., so I hope that will help to let you know how much I appreciate hearing from the wonderful friends like you and Bob Arnold. I shall never forget you and thank you for your friendship and loyalty. I hope that both you and your families have good health and stay happy.

Again Thanks a million and I would love to hear from you when you have a few moments to spare. The tapes were the very best!! Please excuse the poor attempt at typing, I have to hunt and peck!.

Always Yours,
Lawrence Brown

Nya medlemmar

DESS hälsar följande nya medlemmar välkomna i vår illustra förening:

Thomas Petersson,
Stockholm

Gustav Lindqvist,
Oskarström

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

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Reading the above letter, one cannot help wondering what tapes Al Hibbler did send to Lawrence Brown.

The impression a reader gets is that it could possibly emanate from a concert during the Middle East Tour in 1963. Maybe some of our readers have ideas?

Bo Hausman

Two Front Teeth

By Roger Boyes

In a lengthy piece about Lawrence Brown earlier this year, a regular contributor to Jazz Journal had this to say about Lawrence's final departure from the band: "His retirement was not voluntary. After more than 30 years of fury with Ellington, things had finally come to a climax and the two men had had a fight in a European airport. Ellington knocked out two of Brown's front teeth and he was never able to play again."

It is well known that there was no love lost down the years between Duke and Lawrence, and the usual reason given for the ill-feeling is Fredi Washington, the beautiful actress seen in the 1930 film *Black And Tan*. It has been said that Fredi was Lawrence's wife, and that Duke "stole" her from him. On the other hand, Ellington's most recent biographer asserts that Lawrence married Fredi after the actress's affair with Duke was over. This doesn't explain why their past involvement with her should sour the two men's relationship permanently, though Lawrence was undoubtedly a man to harbour grudges, and his marriage to Fredi did not succeed. The biographer also tells the tale of the two front teeth, though he locates the fight "backstage", rather than in a European airport.

The tale of the teeth raises a few eyebrows among JJ readers, mine included. For a start, it doesn't really seem in character with Ellington, who went to great lengths to avoid conflict and stay cool. The combustible Charles Mingus famously punched Jimmy Knepper in the teeth in 1962, inflicting lasting damage, but that wasn't really Ellington's way of doing things. Also, why would he endanger his star trombonist's ability to play, especially in late 1969? By then he was finding it hard to find suitable trombone players. He had recently lost Buster Cooper, and now he was touring Europe with only two, deploying Norris Turney from the reeds to play one of the three trombone pads in Wakefield, where I saw the band on 28 November.



I went to all but one of the annual Ellington conferences between 1988 and 2000, where I heard many people's first-hand experiences of being with Duke and his musicians. I soon learned that the personal relationship of Ellington and Brown was poor, but I don't recall hearing the tale of the two front teeth. I used to jot down notes too, like an undergraduate at a lecture, when new insights came my way. At Ottawa in 1990 Kurt Dietrich, the acknowledged expert on Duke's trombone players, gave a hour-long presentation on Lawrence, but my jottings don't mention the story of the teeth.

Nevertheless, Dietrich does tell the story in his book *Duke's Bones*: "...difficult as it may be to believe, it is now common knowledge that Ellington punched Brown in the mouth, knocking out several teeth." Unfortunately the usually meticulous Dietrich sheds no light on the source of this "common knowledge", and the recent biographer, who defines the "several" teeth as two, cites Dietrich, which doesn't take us any further. He also adds the assertion that Lawrence quit in December. The JJ columnist asserts that after losing the two teeth "he was never able to play again",

A key date in this story is 7 January 1970. On this day Duke recorded for Fantasy in Las Vegas, where the band was in residence at Caesar's Palace with

Lawrence in his usual place in the trombone section. Not all the band took part in the Fantasy session, but Lawrence did, and played on three tracks. *Tippytoeing Through The Jungle Garden* and *Noon Morning* are on Fantasy F-9640 "The Intimacy Of The Blues". The *Kissing Mist* was unfinished. He solos on *Tippytoeing*. It does not sound like the solo of a musician who has suffered the loss of two front teeth, rendering him never able to play again. It sounds like Lawrence soloing in his usual way without impediment.

On 8 January the band closed at Caesar's Palace, and Lawrence left at that point (having handed in his notice to quit in December). The band left to tour Japan, Australia and New Zealand on the following day. Lawrence obviously was not with them, but neither were Willie Cook, Paul Gonsalves, Paul Kondziela and Victor Gaskin, all of whom also stayed back in the USA.

Ken Vail's *Duke's Diary* (part 2, pp370-1), has reviews by Stanley Dance of the Caesar's Palace show and the Fantasy session. Neither report suggests Lawrence was labouring under the sort of difficulty which might be associated with the loss of front teeth in a punch-up, either at an airport or backstage. The latest possible date on which Duke and Lawrence could have fought in a continental European airport is 25 November, when they played in Bristol on the day after a Sa-

cred Concert in Barcelona. If we include Britain in Europe (as I do though the JJ journalist may not), the latest date becomes 1 December, a week later, when they flew home to the USA from England.

The Caesar's Palace residency began on 19 December, and Ken Vail states (p370) that Lawrence handed in his notice a week later, on 26th. New DESOR lists two NBC broadcasts from the residency, on 31 December and 1 January, and also a CBS telecast (The Red Skelton Show) dating from 15/17 December, immediately before the band went to Las Vegas. All are unissued, but Lawrence's presence is noted on all three, and the Italians only document recordings they have heard.

The European airport version of the story of the fight seems most unlikely, given Lawrence's later playing and recording activities through December and into January. The backstage version is also problematic, since it is difficult to square with the evidence of his Tippytoeing solo on the 7 January Fantasy session. What would precipitate a fight between the two men in the narrow time-frame between 7 and 8 January, when Lawrence, after working his notice, was on the point of leaving the band any way, along with several others? An obvious reason for their departure is an understandable wish to avoid another long-distance international tour so soon after the European one in November, and it is unlikely that Duke was unaware of the imminent exodus until 7th.

The fuzziness about the detail of this tale suggests an inclination to make light of factual accuracy, in order to get to the juicy bit. There's no surprise about that. Two of the storytellers are a journalist and a journo-biographer. What the story needs is confirmation and clarification from its source, if that is still possible 45 years later.

Unfortunately, it seems it is not. The tellers of the tale are coy about even naming the source, so it's impossible to check the details. It seems the tale will continue to circulate, unreferenced and with varying amounts of embroidery, until the source is dead, with carefully protected sensitivities intact, but no longer in a position to explain the inconsistencies.

(This article was originally published in DESUK's news magazine Blue Light #4 Winter 2015-16)

A chat with Clark Terry about Willie Cook



Foto: Olle Lindholm

Following the interviews with Willie Cook published in our previous Bulletins 3-4/2016 and 1/2017, Göran Wallén met Clark Terry on December 23, 2005, at Hotel Amaranten in Stockholm and took the opportunity to raise a few questions pertaining to his Willie Cook interviews.

GW: Why was Willie Cook influenced by Harry James?

CT: I can understand why he did, and I can tell you the reason. Miles Davis' first favourite was Harry James. His teacher was Duke Hammer, a dear friend of mine. We used to have a beer together. He used to tell me, "Why don't you come over to the school and see this little Miles Dewey Davis, and check his notes." We were all Harry James fans. Miles used to overdo it. He had a thing for wavering the notes. Duke Hammer used to rap a tape on a long ruler. He said to Miles: "If you check that note one more time I am going to rap you with this ruler."

GW: Why did Willie listen to Charlie Spivak?

CT: Charlie Spivak had a magnificent

pure sound. His theme song was *Star Dream*. I think that Willie Cook liked just the pure song.

GW: Russel "Pops" Smith was his favourite lead trumpeter.

CT: He used to stutter. You could ask him "Hi Pops, what do you tribute your longevity in your experience saying that you playing good lead trumpet", something like that. He said: "Son you got a lot of grease." He was a kind of master grease, spiritual and all that type of person. He was a very magnificent person, strong, very independent.

GW: What about Alabama State Collegians 1942?

CT: I knew Joe Morris the trumpet player. He was called "Chop Chop". He later played lead trumpet in Lionel Hampton's band. He was a marvellous trumpet player.

GW: Willie played in your Big Bad Band.

CT: I had Willie Cook in my band as you know. I also had Willie Singleton together with Willie Cook. We had a tandem and we called them, "Clark got the Willies." They said: "What are you doing, when I was playing." I said "I'm looking for my dups."

A Conversation with Harry Carney

In November 1969 Duke Ellington and his Orchestra spent a few days in Stockholm for concerts and performance on TV. On this occasion the DESS-member Jan Bruér had a chance to talk to Harry Carney. He reported of his conversation in the Orkesterjournalen's January issue 1970 and with Jan's permission we quote his article here:

Duke Ellington and his Orchestra paid a visit to Stockholm in November. With a feeling of both wonder and pleasure we could again meet some of those men who belonged to the band already in the 1920s; Cootie Williams, Johnny Hodges, Harry Carney as well as Lawrence Brown, who is also one of the band's seniors. I thought they should all be close to their retirement, but after a while it happened to meet Harry Carney and he certainly didn't look like a pensioner. He rather looked like being in his 40s. Later on I got to know that he will actually become 60 this spring.

The band was to play their famous Sacred Concert for a TV-broadcast during the coming Christmas Holidays. Together with a few other fans I sneaked into the Gustav Vasa Church to sort of eavesdrop on the rehearsals with the Ellington Orchestra, Alice Babs and the Radio Choir. During an intermission I happened to bump into Harry Carney and I took the opportunity to raise a few blunt questions like "How do you like Sweden." Carney proved to be an utterly sympathetic and pleasant man and he told me some interesting things about the Ellington Orchestra. He heard Duke's band for the first time when he was 15 years old. The band spent a great deal of the summer of 1925 in Harry's hometown Boston, Mass., and so they did the summer of 1926. Harry meant that Duke had a personal style already at that time, despite the fact that the band only consisted of six men.

In March 1927, Harry came to New York during a school vacation. He was not yet 17. He had brought his alto sax along and one day he was engaged by a band playing at a restaurant in Harlem. He stayed with the band for a while. Harry's mother occasionally came to New York to check up on her little son. She wanted to be sure he behaved well



and not wound up with any kind of problems. He didn't misbehave and was allowed to continue playing. "I have no idea how much hot jazz the band played, but suddenly one day the joint caught fire and was burnt down. Fires like that were not uncommon in the Harlem clubs in those days," says Harry.

"Of course I was suddenly unemployed, but then I happened to meet Duke. We knew each other since his Boston gigs, and he offered me right away a seat in his orchestra. I was extremely happy because the band was to play in Boston also this summer. I had after all been away from home for four months".

"On June 16, 1927, I started with Duke. I remember the date because it was an important moment for me. The idea was that I should continue school in the autumn, but Duke managed with some difficulties to persuade my mother to let me continue with his band".

I remember one night we were to play a

"band battle" at Savoy Ballroom against Chick Webb's Orchestra. Duke's band now consisted of eight men, but on this night the band was enlarged, just like Duke did on some of the recordings he made in 1926 and 1927. In Chick Webb's band sat amongst others Johnny Hodges. Johnny and I were the best of friends since our time in Boston. He was like a big brother to me. On that evening I borrowed a white shirt from him. At that time we were the same size", says Harry smiling and turning towards Hodges sitting close by. Today it is difficult to imagine Harry Carney in one of Johnny Hodges' shirts.

Harry was thus a rather small man when he joined Duke, both concerning age and size. This turned out to be something of a complex, and to overcome it he after a few weeks bought himself a baritone saxophone – "just to feel like a man".

Harry had replaced Otto Hardwick in the band which otherwise consisted of Bubber Miley, Tricky Sam Nanton, Rudy Jackson (who concentrated on clarinet and tenor sax), Duke, Freddy Guy, Wellman Braud, and Sonny Greer. Later in the fall Hardwick returned and for the important opening night at the Cotton Club on December 4, 1927, trumpeter Louis Metcalfe was added, making the band ten man strong. Around this time Harry made his first recordings with Ellington and he remembers his first solo (on alto sax) on *What Can A Poor Fellow Do* from November 1927.

I told Harry I had an LP with Ellington rereleases and on it is said that he joined Duke's band already in 1926.

"It is Leonard Feather's fault", says Harry. "He wrote somewhere that I started in 1926 and that error has found its way into all discographies and on all record sleeves".

The Ellington researchers have not been critical enough in this case. It is probably Otto Hardwick (mostly known as alto saxophonist), who plays all baritone solos. Hardwick kept on playing the baritone after the advent of Carney. On the few solos by Carney on the Ellington recordings from 1927 and 1928 they are all on alto sax. The baritone solos are by Hardwick. But as from 1929 Harry Carney (now on baritone) is one of the most frequently heard soloists.

Harry has almost daily since June 16, 1927, played with Duke, an unparalle-

led companionship. I asked Harry about Ellington's remarkable working stamina with constant tours, often mixed with TV performances and recordings.

"Well, Duke likes to work" he replies. "And we in the band of course like to play his music. The tours are no doubt tiring, but we get used to the routines. Seldom do we get a chance to sleep for more than 5 or 6 hours per night. It feels almost weird when we are free one evening. Vacation? Never in this band. We are an organization that keeps going for 365 days a year."

"Well, in 1948 we, as a matter of fact, had a real vacation. For three entire months. That is my life's vacation", says Harry with a smile at the same time as he shows me the touring plan for the month of November. Concerts every day in places spread all over Europe. Thereafter the orchestra is going to Japan, and for the first time to Australia and New Zealand. Journeys in jet speed, often with long distances between gigs.

"In the US it might happen that we play in New York one day and in San Francisco the day after".

When it comes to gramophone recordings Ellington is nowadays not bound to any recording company and therefore his own producer. The orchestra is con-

stantly recording in studios and parts of this material is put together for release on record. The recordings are sold to some record company who will then handle the distribution. A recent Ellington record is a subscription record for Reader's Digest with popular melodies. Something like the Reprise releases "Ellington 65" and "Ellington 66". And how is it with the since long recorded Sacred Concerts with Alice Babs participating? Harry Carney tells me that right now all are optimistic about them being released within short. The reason why the release has been delayed is the fact that the concert is long and Duke does not want to compromise with the recording companies, who for financial reasons want to cut down the work. In this concert the words and the voices are most important and everything has to be included otherwise Duke's intention is lost. Now it seems that finally a company is prepared to release the entire concert in the form of an album.

These Sacred Concerts has meant a lot to Ellington. About a tenth of the orchestra's performances in USA are devoted to The Sacred Concerts, Harry tells me. On this European tour the concert will be played not only in Stockholm, but also in Paris and in Barcelona.

Everybody in the band is happy about Alice Babs' participation. Her voice is such a wonderful mixture of happiness and sadness. Several of the songs in this concert were composed by Duke directly for Alice.

When the band is not playing the Sacred Concerts or common "profane" music, they are engaged in all kinds of performances like dances, TV shows, jazz clubs, and festivals. During the recent "long, hot summer" the orchestra played many free concerts for black audiences.

It is quite a remarkable organization, Duke Ellington and his Orchestra, working 365 days a year.

Jan Bruér



Otto Hardwick was not always sweet

DESS is grateful for any comments we receive from our readers about the contents of our articles. The musicologist Jan Bruér has been kind enough to let us have his opinion about Otto Hardwick's early career with *The Washingtonians*:

Thanks Bo Haufman for your great article on the peculiar personality Otto Hardwick in the last DESS Bulletin (1/2017). But I miss something about Otto the HOT SOLOIST! Because he obviously was! One of the big mysteries in Early Ellingtonia is the swinging and for its time advanced improvised solos on baritone saxophone.

When I interviewed Harry Carney in 1969 (the article can be read in this issue), I realized that there could be several mistakes in the Ellington discographies, especially regarding the early years. Now

and then I have returned to this interesting subject, also in a DESS Bulletin several years ago. I analyzed the first crucial period when both Otto and Harry were in the band, from *Washington Wabble* in October 1927 through March 1928, a session which ended with *Got Everything But You*. I examined (sometimes together with the multi saxophone player in *Kustbandet*, Kenneth Arnström, a great help on this subject) the 38 takes where they both played clarinet, soprano, alto, baritone sax and also where Otto played bass saxophone. All baritone solos before that date are supposed to be played by Otto Hardwick, which Harry confirmed in my interview.

In the beginning Harry played alto and clarinet with the band. It took some time for young Harry (17 years!!) to master the baritone sax. My (and to some degree Kenneth's) analysis is that Otto played all the major baritone sax solos prior to March 26, 1928. Then Harry was ready to take over!

Harry did play some baritone parts in the

section work after some time, here and there, but my suggestion is that he played his first real solo on baritone sax in *Got Everything But You*, which is quite different to all baritone solos before that. His style of phrasing on both alto and baritone is somewhat different from Otto's. Harry improvised with more large intervals than Otto usually did, and Harry also played more staccato while Otto played more legato, "softer", even when his attack was strong. Also, at that time teenager Harry was not so rhythmically assured as the more experienced Otto.

This means that all the excellent hot and improvised baritone sax solos were played by Otto Hardwick, and this adds something important when trying to understand his probably complex personality. He seems to have been an easy going fellow! Just listen to the great baritone solos on numbers like *Song Of The Cotton Field*, *Birmingham Breakdown*, *Down In Our Alley Blues* and so on.

Jan Bruér

Willie Smith

Alto Saxophonist Supreme

John Tumpak examines the career of the great alto saxophonist who, in 1951, replaced Johnny Hodges in the Duke Ellington Orchestra for a year.

The three finest alto saxophone players of the big band era were Benny Carter, Johnny Hodges, and Willie Smith. Both Carter and Hodges have been extensively written about and their body of musical work praised by enthusiasts. However, such is not the case with Willie Smith.

Here is the story of his productive career that spanned five decades and included playing clarinet and alto saxophone, singing hit records, and arranging songs with a number of the preeminent big bands and small jazz groups. He was known and respected for his consistently exceptional musicianship throughout his long professional career.

William McLeish Smith was born in Charleston, SC, on November 25, 1910. His middle name came from his mother's grandfather who was Scottish. She was of African American, French, and Scotch ancestry. His father, who was an independent contractor, was African American and Native American in ancestry. Smith's mother played piano and his father sang in the church choir. His older sister Maude graduated from the Avery Normal Institute in Charleston, studied music at Fisk University in Nashville, and became an accomplished pianist and head of the music department at Avery.

His was a family that demanded accountability. Smith's parents set high standards for personal responsibility and hard work. As a young boy Smith worked two newspaper routes before he went to school which required him to get up daily at 4 AM. He also regularly worked with his father on contracting jobs.

At around ten years of age Smith took up the clarinet, studying under an elderly German music teacher whom he always remembered as an excellent clarinetist and an authority on classical music. He practiced diligently and by fourteen was playing in local concerts and recitals. His mother was also during this time booking him as a featured clarinet player at church services.

Following his sister's educational path, Smith graduated from the Avery Normal Institute. A voracious reader and outstanding student, he skipped several grades and started college at fourteen at Fisk University. A devoted scholar,

Smith graduated from Fisk in 1929 with a degree in chemistry when he was only eighteen. He very much enjoyed his college experience that scholastically included both music and science studies.

Smith enrolled in Fisk with the intention of becoming a doctor or pharmacist, but those intentions quickly fell by the wayside when he rapidly developed a consuming interest in music. At Fisk he took elective courses in music harmony and theory and played in a campus chamber music ensemble. During his summer vacations of 1926 and 1927 Smith played professionally in the Boston Serenaders in Memphis and the Betty Conner Quartet in Belmar, NJ. By the time he graduated he was skilled in playing most of the reed instruments.

Although he certainly did not realize it at the time, the course of Smith's life changed during his freshman year when he played in a band led by Jimmie Lunceford who at the time was a Fisk senior majoring in sociology. After graduation, Lunceford took postgraduate studies at New York City College then accepted an offer to become a music and physical education teacher at Manassas High School in Memphis. He immediately organized a school band and from that band selected musicians to form an eleven piece jazz band he called The Chickasaw Syncopators. But Lunceford did not forget Smith who played with him during his Fisk days. When Smith graduated, Lunceford asked him to join his group. Smith immediately accepted, joining Lunceford during the summer of



1929 in Memphis much to his parents' chagrin. They were deeply religious and shocked that their college educated son would eschew a professional career in science and become a jazz musician exposed to the temptations of a secular lifestyle.

From 1929 to 1942 Smith was a valued member of the Lunceford organization contributing to its phenomenal success in four musical areas. First, as a musician he was a superb clarinet and alto saxophone virtuoso who played numerous solos on Lunceford recordings and was highly respected by the members of the band. Many of those solos are of big band legend. In the liner notes for *The Complete Jimmie Lunceford Decca Sessions* released by Mosaic Records in 2011 Lunceford authority Eddy Determeyer wrote that Smith was the most memorable soloist in the band, and the band did not lack for memorable soloists.

Second, armed with formal music training by his German teacher in Charleston and at Fisk, it was only natural that Smith would be attracted to arranging. Until the mid-30s he, pianist Edwin Wilcox, who was also from Fisk, and trumpeter Sy Oliver were the band's regular arrangers. But by mid-decade Smith's interest in arranging waned, and from then on he concentrated solely on playing music. Smith did return to arranging one last time when he and Gerald Wilson orchestrated the two-sided Lunceford recording of *Blues in the Night* written by Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer. It was a top ten hit in 1942. The Lunceford band also perfor-

med in the 1941 Warner Brothers musical drama film *Blues in the Night*.

Third, although not a classic big band crooner, Smith had a pleasing vocal tone and an ability to swing a melody and adapt his voice with a jazz shading and a sense of humor to fit the lyrics of a song. Smith sang on stage and on Lunceford recordings, a few of which registered on the charts. His biggest hit record was *Rhythm Is Our Business* which got to number one in 1935. It was the only Lunceford hit that ever made it to the top of the hit parade. Smith was also a charter member of the Lunceford vocal Trio and Quartet. Drawn from the sidemen in the band, both groups sang on Lunceford recordings and were praised by Will Friedwald in his book *Jazz Singing* for their unique mellow harmony.

Finally, a little-recognized contribution to the Lunceford band by Smith was as a section leader. He was a perfectionist and task master who spent long hours rehearsing the saxophone section. His discipline and endless rehearsals built a cohesive unit that many big band historians considered to be among the best in the business. Thanks to Smith's leadership the section developed a feeling of accomplishment and pride playing intricate saxophone passages in unison to near perfection.

Throughout the 1930s the hallmark of the Lunceford band was its esprit de corps and loyalty of the band members to the organization. For example, in 1936 Tommy Dorsey gave Smith a blank check to fill out for any amount to come over and join the Dorsey band. Smith refused out of loyalty to Lunceford. Then around 1940 things changed when Lunceford's income dramatically increased due to the band's considerable success. He bought and flew his own airplanes and generally lived the life of the rich and famous without sharing his good fortune by increasing the band member's pay. This unwise judgment led to feelings of dissatisfaction among the musicians and they began to leave seeking better compensation with other bands. Smith himself exited in the summer of 1942. He cried when he left.

After leaving Lunceford, Smith joined Charlie Spivak's dance band that was playing at the Hotel Pennsylvania in Manhattan. When called upon, the Spivak band could swing thanks to arrangements by Jimmy Mundy and Son-

ny Burke, but the band's main claim to fame was Spivak's sweet trumpet playing. Smith liked his time with the band that lasted for around a year and admired Spivak's sound on ballads. Next came military service when he entered the Navy in 1943. Smith was assigned to the Great Lakes Naval Training Center just north of Chicago. He was in the base band along with Clark Terry, Ernie Wilkins, and Gerald Wilson. They all belonged to the Ship's Company that afforded the privilege of living in Chicago and commuting to the base daily. Gerald Wilson was the last survivor of the Lunceford Orchestra and was a good friend of Smith when they played together with Lunceford. They remained close friends at Great Lakes. Wilson recently recalled attending Chicago Cub games at Wrigley Field with Smith and fellow Lunceford alumni Joe Thomas and hauling a new refrigerator up a steep flight of stairs with great difficulty to the second floor of the Chicago apartment that Smith and his wife Fischella were living in while they were stationed at Great Lakes.

When Smith was discharged after a year with the Navy in 1944 he settled in Los Angeles with no work, so he decided to call Harry James to see if he needed a saxophone player. Then a truly amazing incident took place. As he picked up the phone to call James, before he even had a chance to dial James's telephone number, he was startled when a voice came on without a phone ring and said hello. It was his old friend Juan Tizol who was playing with James. He said James needed a saxophone player and would Smith be interested in the job. Smith jumped at the chance to play with one of the most popular big bands in the country



and joined James at Frank Dailey's Meadowbrook in Cedar Grove, NJ. It was the start of an association with James that lasted from 1944 to 1963 with just a short interruption starting in 1951.

Contributions to the James band by Smith were considerable. Other than James himself, he was the band's star soloist and took over as section leader for the saxophones. When asked how important Smith was to the James band the band's bassist Red Kelly said, "He was the heart and soul of the band for almost twenty years. Everything revolved around him on any band he was on. He would grab a band all by himself on alto saxophone and swing it." James understood this. Whenever the band's mood was down, James would say to Smith "Go up and play something." Smith did and the band always responded positively. As with Lunceford, he also sang with the band, recording *Who's Sorry Now?* that was a smash hit in 1947.

The jazz world was stunned in March 1951 when trombonist Lawrence Brown, drummer Sonny Greer, and saxophonist Johnny Hodges left Duke Ellington to form their own group. Ellington quickly filled those three holes by taking Smith, drummer Louie Bellson, and trombonist Juan Tizol away from James in what became known to big band fans as the "Great James Robbery". Smith quickly made an impact on the Ellington band. According to Gerald Wilson, Ellington was delighted to have him and, as the band's section leader, Smith worked the Ellington reed section into distinctive shape. However, it was not easy. He did meet with some resistance from Ellington's musicians who were not used to organized practices and observing punctuality. Smith spent exactly one year with Ellington, leaving the band in March 1952 while they were playing in Oregon and returned to Los Angeles where he reunited with his old friend Billy May.

In 1945 Smith made recordings with five of his own different small groups, one of which included Billy May, and a solid friendship between the two quickly developed. In 1952 the Billy May Orchestra was hot. It placed sixth in Down Beat's Best Band category for 1952 and was steadily recording hit records and albums. Smith joined May's band as soon as he returned to Los Angeles and stayed with May until early 1953 when he left to lead his own band at the Oasis Club

in Los Angeles. Smith worked with May again in 1957 when May recorded the album *Jimmie Lunceford in Hi-Fi*. It included several of the old Lunceford sidemen and was May's tribute to the Lunceford band that was his all-time favorite big band.

By the spring of 1954 Smith was ready to return to James, and James was happy to have him back. He would remain with James as featured attraction for the next nine years into 1963. Over the entire time Smith worked with James he was also able to sporadically take leave from James and work on other projects such as playing with the Lionel Hampton All Stars at Gene Norman's Just Jazz concert at Pasadena Civic Auditorium in August 1947 and Nat "King" Cole on his 1956 *After Midnight* album and Ella Fitzgerald on her 1965 *Ella Fitzgerald Sings The Johnny Mercer Songbook* album. There was also a near ten year participation with Jazz at the Philharmonic (JATP).

Norman Granz began his JATP series of concerts at the Philharmonic Auditorium in Los Angeles in 1944. Smith played at the Philharmonic that year and traveled with the JATP troop on three or four tours, including one to Europe in 1953. He also played on two of Granz's most famous albums, *The Jazz Scene* and *Norman Granz Presents: Jazz At The Philharmonic. Carnegie Hall Concert September 13, 1952*. Smith was one of Granz's lifelong favorites, starting from the first time he saw him play at Billy Berg's Trouville Club in Los Angeles in 1942. Smith, in turn, liked Granz personally and enjoyed his involvement with him playing and touring with the outstanding jazz musicians of the day.

Sadly, there was a dark side to Smith's time with Jimmie Lunceford that validated his parent's concerns about his entering the world of jazz. Smith started to drink when he was with Lunceford to relieve the boredom of being on the road for almost every night of the year. The situation steadily worsened over time and by the summer of 1963 his drinking problem was out of control and he started to show up late for rehearsals and engagements with the James band. It reached the point where James had no choice but to let him go. Then over a year later, in 1964, Smith played a substitute



engagement on short notice with Charlie Barnet in Los Angeles and had considerable difficulty in making it through all the evening's sets. Barnet and the band's drummer, Philly Joe Jones, were saddened by what they saw.

Not long after the Barnet incident, Smith became seriously sick from drinking and went into a hospital on his own for treatment. At the same time Billy May, who well knew the life of an alcoholic, urged Smith to join Alcoholics Anonymous. By mid-1965 Smith was on the wagon and back on the Los Angeles scene playing with several different bands and in recording studio sessions. In August 1965, at the urging of his friend jazz authority and record producer Harry Lim, Smith recorded his own album, *The Best of Willie Smith: Alto Saxophonist Supreme!* It included his friend, jazz accordionist Tommy Gumina who he had done dates with in the past. In the liner notes Lim stated that Smith was playing better than ever.

During 1966 Smith kept active in Los Angeles and in November was greeted by Charlie Barnet with open arms when he recorded on the last album Barnet issued under his own name titled *Charlie Barnet Big Band 1967*. Although recorded in Hollywood in 1966 it was released in 1967. Then in December he went east

with Barnet to play an engagement with his band at Basin Street East in the Shelton Towers Hotel in Manhattan. Their appearance was given rave reviews in Newsweek and the World Journal Tribune. Smith was cited in both publications.

For going on two years Smith had not had a drink and maintained his sobriety during considerable temptation at the Basin Street East gig drinking only ginger ale. But while he was in New York, he started to have trouble swallowing. When Smith returned to Los Angeles he checked himself into the Veterans Administration Hospital where he received cobalt treatment for an ulcerated esophagus. After he was discharged he returned to his home at 3485 3rd Avenue where he suddenly died on March 7, 1967, not long after coming home. According to his obituary in Downbeat, the cause of Smith's death was a massive stomach hemorrhage. Fischella, who saw him through many difficult times,

was with him until the end. After Smith's passing, Fischella continued to live in Los Angeles where she died in 1991 at seventy-six years of age.

Willie Smith was somewhat of a paradox. He was highly intelligent yet uncomplicated in makeup. He was one of the guys yet a deep thinker well read in politics and the arts. He was genial and well liked yet a strong and disciplined section leader. He was a heavy drinker yet always conducted himself as a gentleman. He was educated as a scientist yet music was his passion. However, there are no professional paradoxes. Smith will always be remembered by both jazz fans and musicologists as a superb big band musician, arranger, and vocalist. There is also the matter of peer approval. From the very beginning of his career Smith was admired by the professional jazz community for his multifaceted music talents. A good example of the respect Smith was held in by his contemporaries was documented when singer Billy Eckstine praised him for contributions to the big bands in an article he wrote for the March 1952 issue of Downbeat. Blessed with an incomparable technique and tone, Willie Smith's prominent rank in jazz history is both well-deserved and worthy of yet a higher level of public recognition

John Tumpak

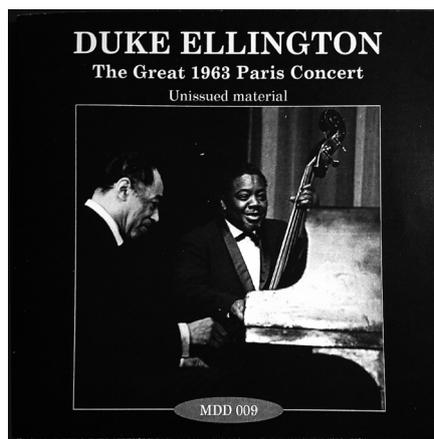
Nya skivor

Duke Ellington

- The Great 1963 Paris Concert
- Unissued material

Detta är titeln på en ny CD (MDD 009) som givits ut av vår franska systerförening och endast kan inhandlas av dess medlemmar. Många känner säkert till denna skivas föregångare med snarlik titel, som kom ut som dubbel-LP år 1973 och sedermera även som dubbel-CD (med bonus-spår) på Atlantic år 1989. Innehållet i dessa var hämtat från konserter på Olympia i Paris den 1, 2 och 23 februari 1963. Det material som nu har getts ut, och tidigare varit utgivet på skiva, kommer från konserten den 23 februari, 1:a och 2:a föreställningen.

När Duke och hans orkester kom till Europa i början på 1963, var det första gången sedan hösten 1959 man fick trampa europeisk mark på drygt tre år och en hel del hade hänt sedan dess.



Bland annat så var nu både Cootie Williams och Lawrence Brown tillbaka och i trumpetsektionen fanns en nykomling, Roy Burrowes. Även trombonisterna Buster Cooper, Chuck Connors och basisten Ernie Shepard var nya för publiken i Europa. Rent musikaliskt togs publiken med storm, för när man lyssnar på denna musik inser man att alla musiker var i toppform. Intressant nog får man höra både Roy Burrowes och Russel Procope

ta var sitt solo på trumpet respektive alt-sax på det inledande numret *Stompin' At The Savoy*, och Paul Gonsalves får stort utrymme på både *Happy Reunion* och *Broadstream*. I övrigt vill man gärna framhålla Jimmy Hamiltons fina klarinettspel på *Silk Lace*, Johnny Hodges i *Day Dream* och *Star-Crossed Lovers* samt Cootie Williams, som inte hörts med Duke i Europa sedan 1939, i *New Concerto For Cootie*. Urvalet av låtar på denna skiva är mycket bra, liksom ljudkvaliteten och det är därför tråkigt att behöva konstatera att den bjuds ut till en så liten målgrupp.

Skivan har följande innehåll:

Stompin' At The Savoy/Pyramid/Happy Reunion/Broad Stream/Day Dream/Harlem (1:a)/Take The A Train/Silk Lace/New Concerto For Cootie/Star-Crossed Lovers/Skin Deep/Just Squeeze Me/Diminuendo In Blue & Blow By Blow (2:a)

Anders Asplund

Duke Ellington – An Intimate Piano Session

Medan denna Bulletin är under utarbetande får vi veta att Storyville Records står i begrepp att ge ut en CD med tidigare utgivet material. Den beräknas finnas tillgänglig på marknaden under mars/april. Vi citerar här Storyvilles beskrivning av innehållet:

Previously unreleased music from the fingertips of Duke Ellington: An intimate 1972 session with the Duke on solo piano plus three bonus tracks from 1969.

The scene is 311 West 57 Street, New York, Mediasounds Studio A, Friday August 25th, 1972. Duke Ellington was having an engagement with a smaller group at The Rainbow Grill, as he had had several times before, finishing the gig on the following night. But on the 25th, he chose also to go the recording studio, just himself at the piano together with his two band singers Anita Moore and Tony Watkins, to record some pieces which were not played so often. The re-



cordings remained in his "stockpile" until now, this being the first commercial issue of these beautiful pieces. The late Sjef Hoefsmit wrote about the session when he heard it back in 1994: "It is difficult to understand why these magnificent recordings never have been issued". Well, here they are at last for all to enjoy!

Among the gems you'll find tracks such as two takes of the Billy Strayhorn composition *Lotus Blossom*, the Duke's

own *Le Sucrier Velours* and his emotional *My Mother, My Father and Love*. The latter was often performed with the Duke himself as a vocalist, reciting his own lyrics. No doubt the words meant a great deal to him, both personally and as part of his positive stories about the black communities in the USA.

The new CD contains three additional bonus tracks. On November 7th, 1969, Duke Ellington and his orchestra played two concerts in Rotterdam, in the famous De Doelen concert hall. The second concert of the evening was prolonged as the public wouldn't let Ellington go. So while the rest of the bandmembers left the stage, a quartet with Duke, Wild Bill Davis, bassist Victor Gaskin and drummer Rufus Jones stayed, and played four more numbers, much to the delight of the sold-out house. You can hear the whole band concert on the Storyville CD "Rotterdam 1969" (1018440) and here we offer the "afterparty" music by the quartet. The new CD has catalogue number 1018445.

SVEND ASMUSSEN IN MEMORIAM

Vem kan bättre författa en nekrolog över spelmannen Svend Asmussen än en av våra danska medlemmar, nämligen Frits Schjött?

Tre uger før han ville være fyldt 101 år døde Svend Asmussen, stille og fredfyldt i familiens skød.

Hans sidste år blev lykkelige takket være et nyt ægteskab med den amerikanskfødte forfatter og litterat Ellen Bick Meier, som han mødte et par år efter sin første hustrus død efter 63 års ægteskab, i år 2000. I årtiet 2000-2010 (hvor han altså rundede de 90 år) spillede og optrådte han som en ung mand, indspillede og udgav i 2009 en CD for Arbor Records i USA, som fik glimrende anmeldelser (prøv < littlebeatrecords.dk > der er muligvis et lille restoplæg endnu), og selvom en blodprop 2010 satte en stopper for offentlig musikfremførelse, var han åndsfrisk og velfungerende til det sidste.

En nærmere redegørelse for hans biografi og meriter som musiker, komponist, kapelmester og skuespiller (det sidste gennem en årrække midt i 1900-tallet), ville kunne fylde et helt nummer af DESS-bulletinen, så jeg vil henvise til "Svend Asmussen - 100 år for fuld musik" af Büchmann-Møller og Frandsen (Lindhardt og Ringhof, 2015) og "June Nights - Svend Asmussens liv i musik fortalt til Ellen Bick Meier" (Gyldendal, 2005) - begge såre læseværdige

I nærværende sammenhæng finder jeg det mere relevant at komme ind på hans relation til Duke Ellington, der går tilbage til 1950'erne og kulminerede med en indspilningssession i 1963. Jeg citerer fra 2015-bogen: "Hvordan forshistorien var og om indspilningsforløbet fortæller Svend: Jeg spillede med mit orkester i en Stig Lommer-revy i Stockholm på Kungsgatan i den biograf, der hed Royal. Vi spillede, som det var sædvanen dengang, to forestillinger hver aften og ingen friaftener i fire måneder. Så var man også træt. I koncerthuset lige ved siden af havde Duke Ellington koncert. Så kom der en journalist og spurgte, om jeg havde lyst til at komme efter koncerten, for der skulle være et lille party hos denne journalist. Jeg kom med min vio-



lin, og der sad Duke ved et opretstående klaver med ryggen til og var i gang med Honeysuckle Rose, tror jeg. Til min forbavselse lød han som Fats Waller. Han spillede stridende piano - tjing-boom, tjing-boom - og det swingede. Jeg anede ikke, han var sådan en swingpianist, som han var. Jeg plukkede violinen frem og begyndte at spille med, og vi spillede vel en ti minutter og nåede frem til en slutning, og så vendte han sig om, kiggede mig ind i øjnene og sagde, "Man you play a hell of a lot of fiddle! My name is Duke, what's yours?" Vi fortsatte med at spille hele natten, og så var vi venner siden dengang. - Nogle år senere ringede han til mig. Han havde fået frie hænder til at indspille, lige hvad han ville - med symfoniorkester, sit orkester og forskellige kombinationer, af det firma, der hed Reprise, og som var Frank Sinatras. Han indspillede hver nat, og hans orkester blev trættede og trættede, for de havde aldrig fri, de spillede ustandselig. Så spurgte han, om jeg havde lyst til at komme til Paris og lave en plade med violiner. Han havde jo selv Ray Nance, som jeg kendte - jeg havde jammet med ham i New York, og han spillede trompet og violin. Og så skulle Stephane Grappelli, min gamle violinven fra Paris, også være med, plus Duke Ellingtons rytmesektion plus nogle blæsere, bl.a. min favorittenorspiller Paul Gonsalves. Jeg syntes, han spillede så vidunderligt og på en helt personlig måde som ingen af de andre.

Duke havde forberedt på skitsevis nogle noder for tre blæsere og rytmesek-

tionen, og vi læste lidt noder, vi tre violinister. For ikke at blive forvekslet med de to andre, gennemførte jeg at spille på min bratsch, som er en hestelængde dybere end de to andre violiner, så man lige kunne høre, hvem der var hvem. Den session begyndte kl. 10 om aftenen i et studie i Paris, og Duke gjorde sin spektakulære entré. Han havde en hvid kameluldsfrakke på og en sort hat med bred skygge og var ledsaget af en spansk grevinde, der var et halvt hoved højere end ham i en sort nertzpel og stor hvid hat. Det var meget flot at se på.

Vi begyndte at spille fra kl. 10. Sam Woodyard var med på trommer, og jeg kan huske, at efter et af numrene skulle vi undtagelsesvis ind at høre resultatet. Ellers brød Ellington sig aldrig om at høre på det - han sagde bare "Wonderful. Next number!" Men her fik jeg en sød kompliment af Sam Woodyard: Han tog mig om skulderen og sagde: "Man, you play your ass off!" - "Well, if I play my ass off, then my name is only 'Mussen' from now on!" - Ved femtiden om morgenen havde vi indspillet 21 titler og Duke sagde: "Is anybody tired? Let's call it off!"

Frits Schjött

(Svend Asmussen föddes de 28 februari 1916 och lämnade detta jordeliv den 7 februari 2017.)

Ett möte med Svend Asmussen i Uppsala

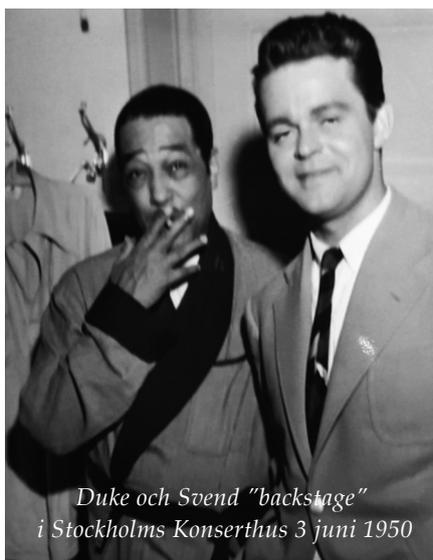
För lite över 10 år sedan spelade Svend Asmussen med sin kvartett i Stockholm på "Gamla Ackis" vid Nybroviken och dagen därpå en lördag i Uppsala på restaurang Katalin.

Svends kvartett bestod av Jacob Fischer (g), Jesper Lundgaard (b), Aage Tanggaard (dr). Under lördagen hade jag och Bosse Stenhammar ett ärende till restaurang Katalin för att träffa ägarinnan Katalin själv. Efter samtalet ordnade hon det så att jag ensam skulle stanna kvar till konserten. Det blev en underbar kväll med kvartetten. Svend var i högform. När Svend spelade *June Night* fick jag tårar i ögonen. Efteråt serverades det middag med kvartetten och då deltog även Svends amerikanska hustru Ellen vid bordet, som talade utmärkt danska.

Vid middagen placerades jag bredvid Svend och jag frågade bl.a. om hur det var att spela in en LP 1963 med Ray Nance och Stephane Grappelli med namnet Jazz Violin Session. Svend svarade "ja, det var ingen större ordning på Ray Nance och Grappelli spelade mest vackert."

Min fråga blev då vilken violinist tyckte Svend var mest intressant? Det var Stuff Smith, som var hans stora förbild. Från Stuff Smith anammade Svend sin swing-musik. Kvällen blev ett trevligt minne och stort tack till en generös Katalin som bjöd på mat, musik och hotell.

Göran Wallén



Duke och Svend "backstage" i Stockholms Konserthus 3 juni 1950

I samband med Svend Asmussens bortgång

presenterade Mattias Enn en känslsam dikt på Facebook. Men visst kan man väl säga att den gäller alla våra stora artister som gått ur tiden.

*De reser ständigt från oss,
en efter en,
artisterna, vars namn man kände till
för länge sen.
Måhända kommer nya stjärnor,
bloss i långa rader,
men svunnet sken är starkare
på minnenas estrader.
När någon lämnar detta jordeliv,
så stängs för gott en dörr.
dess nycklar tar han med sig,
och inget blir som förr,
men tack från din publik
på andra sidan Öresund,
Sven Asmussen, i natt din violin
är hos John Blund.*

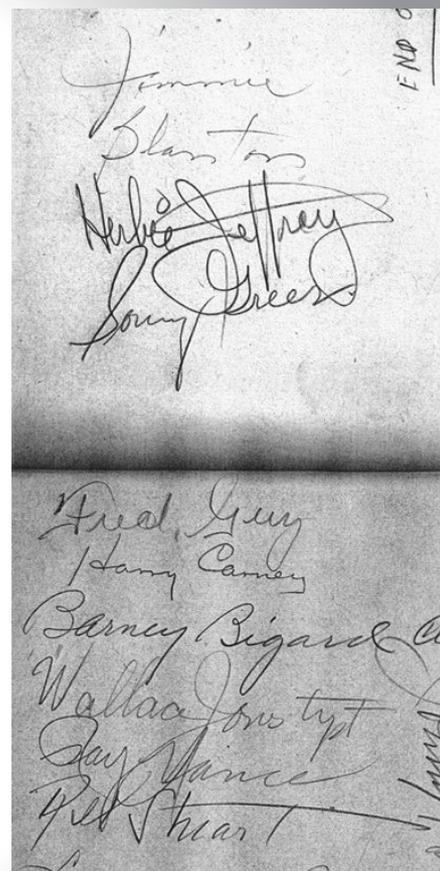
Dikten illustrerades med ett avsnitt ur Swe-Danes TV show 1959, där trion sjöng Den Lille Ole (dvs John Blund).

Rätt stavade namn

I jazzlitteraturen har det över åren utvecklats en kutym hur vissa jazzpersonligheter skriver sina namn och hur deras namn har kommit att hanteras i litteraturen. Vi har i tidigare Bulletiner kunnat konstatera att Arthur Whetsol rätteligen hette Whetsel. Otto Hardwick är omskriven med ett felaktigt "e" på slutet. Rex Stewart är allmänt känd med denna skrivning men faktum är att han i autografer ofta skrev sitt namn "Stuart". Vilken stavning som är den rätta i fallet Stewart har mig veterligen aldrig blivit fastställt. I fallet Johnny Hodges förekommer ofta uppgiften att han är född den 25 juli 1906. Så säger exempelvis Leonard Feather i sin "Encyclopedia of Jazz".

Men han är rätteligen född 1907. Detta bekräftas av Patricia Willard, som intervjuat Hodges vid flera tillfällen. Vid ett sådant tillfälle har han dessutom bekräftat att hans namn inte är Hodges utan Hodge med förnamnen Cornelius John i denna ordning. Emellertid torde det väl ändå förhålla sig så att stavningen Hodges är så inrotad att det är praktiskt omöjligt att få jazzvärlden att acceptera stavningen Hodge. Se bifogade bilder som visar deras autografer. Observera även att Herb Jeffries tecknade sitt namn Herbie Jeffrey.

Göran Wallén



4-4-48

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Social Security No. 111-07-0409

I. Check the box in the line below which applies to you on the date this form is filled in:

Married person living with husband or wife but claiming none of the personal exemption..... (1)

Married person living with husband or wife but claiming half of the personal exemption..... (2)

Single person (not head of a family) or married person not living with husband or wife (not head of a family)..... (3)

Married person living with husband or wife and claiming all of the personal exemption (spouse claiming none of the exemption)..... (4)

Head of a family (a single person or married person not living with husband or wife who exercises family control and supports closely connected dependent relative(s) in one household)..... (5)

II. Number of dependents receiving chief support from you who are either under 18 years of age or incapable of self support because mentally or physically defective. 3 Children, Mother..... 4

I declare that the entries made herein are a true and complete statement as of the date indicated, pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code and the regulations issued under authority thereof.

Date March 28, 1944, 194.....
16-34896-1 (Signature) John Hodge

Posttidning B

Duke Ellington Society of Sweden
c/o Leif Jönsson, Anbudsvägen 15
187 50 TÄBY

KALLELSE!

Duke Ellington Society of Sweden
hälsar sina medlemmar välkomna till medlemsmöte
torsdagen den 27 april (Obs. veckodagen)



Ulf Johansson Werre



Gert Palmcrantz

PLATS:

Franska Skolans Aula, Döbelngatan 3, Stockholm.
Portkod för kvällen: 0427 - Entrén öppen från kl. 17.00.
Entréavgift: 200:- i kontanter.
Notera portkoden som endast gäller för denna kväll.
Kommer Du inte in så ring: 070-622 88 16 eller 070-540 70 09

PROGRAM:

17.30 - 18.30

Gert Palmcrantz, känd folkbildare inom jazzen och tillika DESS-medlem, har ett stort musikarkiv att ösa ur. I kväll ger han oss en överblick över sina erfarenheter av Duke Ellington och spelar upp ett antal sällan hörda inspelningar som har en relation till Ellington.

18.30 - 19.00

PAUS med möjlighet till mingel och inköp av öl/vin 30:- och wraps 40:-.
Obs. Endast kontanter gäller.

19.00 - 20.15

Ulf Johansson Werre gästar oss och underhåller oss genom att demonstrera olika stilarter inom jazzen både på piano och på trombon.
Ulf kan faktiskt spela piano och trombon samtidigt.

Måste ses och höras!

Tiderna är ungefärliga.

Resterande medlemsmöten under året:
2 oktober och 11 december.
Notera i Din almanacka!

Duke Ellington Society of Sweden, DESS

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DESS

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International Bank
Account

IBAN#: SE95 6000 0000 0002 8408 3992

BIC: HANDSESS

DESS medlemsavgift

är per kalenderår:

Inom Norden 250 kr

Membership outside Scandinavia
annual fee USD 40