



# Duke Ellington Society of Sweden

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## Louis Metcalf A forgotten Ellingtonian

I detta nummer

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# Let the ZOOM-ers drool!

Under normala omständigheter skulle med denna Bulletin även utgå en inbjudan till föreningens årsmöte, tänkt att äga rum den 15 februari. Under sommaren när Covid-19 tycktes vara under kontroll rådde ingen tvekan om att genomföra årsmötet som planerat. Men denna höst har den andra vågen svept över samhället med svåra konsekvenser som följd. Restriktionerna har skärpts. Nu bör max åtta personer samlas i en lokal. Det säger sig självt att det inte går att genomföra ett årsmöte med endast åtta deltagare. Diskussioner har förts inom styrelsen om att utlysa årsmötet som ett ZOOM-möte, men efter mycket övervägande har vi skrinlagt det förslaget. En anledning är att det är praktiskt svårt att genomföra och framförallt att pga att endast ett fåtal medlemmar har

velat ansluta sig till ZOOM. Styrelsen har därför beslutat att skjuta på årsmötet tills omständigheterna så tillåter. När detta så kan ske får den fortsatta Covid-19-utvecklingen bestämma.

Inom styrelsen har vi hållit ett styrelsemöte via ZOOM, som i mindre sammanhang är ett trevligt sätt att stråla samman via datorn. Andra föreningar har även tillämpat ZOOM inklusive Duke Ellington Center For The Arts som arrangerade ett ZOOM-möte på temat The Nutcracker Suite med levande musik och dans. Vår ambitiöse webbredaktör Ulf Lundin har även anammat idén med ZOOM och startat något som han kallar DESScafé varvid ett speciellt Ellingtontema belyses. Mer om detta på annan plats i denna Bulletin.

I föregående nummer ingick en ar-

tikel kallad "Mitt möte med Duke" och samtidigt inbjöds alla medlemmar att inkomma med sin egen beskrivning av hur de en gång "drabbades" av Duke Ellingtons musik. Beklagligtvis har ingen nappat på idén, men erbjudandet kvarstår.

På sidan 19 i denna Bulletin har jag roat mig med att införa ett korsord med huvudsakligen jazzrelaterade ord och namn. Troligen inte särskilt svårt att lösa för den som är något bevandrad bland jazzens utövare. Skicka in Din lösning till undertecknad (Södra Kungsvägen 234, 18162 Lidingö) senast den 1 mars. Den som inte vill offra en sida ur Bulletinen kan fota eller scanna av korsordet och mejla till bo.haufman@telia.com. Jag tillåter mig att vara enväldig domare och dra en vinnare bland de rätta lösningarna. Vinnaren belönas med en hörvärd CD. Styrelsens medlemmar deltar utom tävlan.

Till sist en påminnelse. Du har väl inte glömt att betala medlemsavgiften?



Bo Haufman, ordförande DESS

## Reaktioner

I min ledare i föregående nummer av Bulletinen nämnde jag att jag var beredd på att få kritik för min uppfattning om Paul Gonsalves kapacitet som tenorist. Men faktum är att jag hittills endast fått erkännande kommentarer, vilka jag är överraskande tacksam för. Jag vill här citera DESS-medlemmen Lennart Perssons mejl till mig:

"Ett stort tack för Ditt fina reportage om Paul Gonsalves. Jag hade själv det stora nöjet att lära känna Paul litet under orkesterns vistelse i Sverige 1963. Jag hade turen att vara i Stockholm när Duke Ellington spelade på Gröna Lund och Dans In en hel vecka. Där mötte jag Paul, som ville hjälpa mig att få tag på autografer från medlemmarna i bandet. Rolf Ericson var också behjälplig. I pausen ville Paul ha något i sig, t.ex. en hamburgare, så vi traskade i väg och fixade en varsin sådan. Paul bjöd, det gjorde han alltid.



Jag var där hela veckan och samma procedur upprepades varje kväll. Jag hörde sedan orkestern på några andra ställen under sverigeturnén, Halmstad, Huskvarna och Karlshamn. Paul var en mycket vänlig och snäll person. Något med droger märkte jag aldrig av. Det var en underbar tid för en då drygt 20-årig Ellingtonfan."

Bo Haufman

## Nya medlemmar

DESS hälsar följande nya medlemmar välkomna i vår illustra förening:

Gun Bernce, Malmö  
Bo Fredricsson, Köping  
Francis Capeau, Saint-Mande, Frankrike  
Lawrence Collins, London, England  
Rob Bamberger, Arlington, VA., USA  
Helena Martins, Madrid, Spanien  
Roger Nilsson, Kolmården

# Ny mötesplats för DESS-medlemmar



Den 26 oktober öppnade DESScafé för första gången. Det är ett resultat av vad som hänt under Covid-19 pandemin.

Med stängningen av samhället med kraftiga begränsningar av människors möjlighet att röra sig fritt, parad med inskränkningar i rätten att ordna möten och evenemang har DESS liksom många andra föreningar och kulturinstitutioner varit tvungna att ställa in de planerade mötena under 2020. Samtidigt har kreativa krafter inom kultursektorn insett att digitaliseringen av samhället skapat möjligheter att nå ut till sin publik, trots instängningarna och många konserthus, musikklubbar och enskilda musiker började strömma sin musik.

Det har öppnat nya möjligheter för mig som bor lite isolerad. Jag har aldrig kunnat ”gå på” musikarrangemang och klubbar som nu. Så en sen natt (eller snarare tidig morgon) efter att virtuellt ha besökt Village Vanguard i New York och lyssnat på en konsert slog mig tanken att man kanske skulle hitta en form för att hålla virtuella DESS-möten så att medlemmar kunde träffas, lyssna på musik och diskutera. Efter diskussioner med Anders Asplund, Göran Axelsson och Bo Haufman fick idén fastare form och DESScafé föddes. Programförklaringen är enkel. ”DESScafé är avsett att vara ett ställe där Ellington- och swingintresserade kan mötas virtuellt då och då mellan de normala DESS-mötena för att lyssna till musik eller höra kortare föredrag.”

I skrivande stund har det ordnats två DESScafé. Det första, som alltså ägde rum den 26 oktober, hade temat ”Andra spelar Ellington”. De 16 deltagarna i mötet fick höra Ellingtonlåtar alltförifrån *Black And Tan Fantasy* med både Mills Blue Rhythm Band och Jimmie Lunceford till *I'm Gonna Go Fishin'* med Gerry Mulligan and His Concert Jazz Band och Bill Evans version av *Reflections In D*.

Det andra kafémötet ägde rum den 16 november och hade rubriken ”Ur mitt Ellingtonarkiv”. Fem DESS-medlemmar hade valt ut totalt 12 låtar som t.ex. *Hot Feet*, *Self Portrait Of The Bean*, *Some Saturday*, *Sono* och *Praise God*.

Under resten av året blir det ytterligare tre kafémöten med ämnen som Willie Smith, Clark Terry och Pousse Café. Webbplatsen rapporterar om mötena och all information om dem, inkl. spellistor och ev. videoinspelningarna kommer att samlas i avdelningen DESScafé.

Den tekniska grunden för DESScafé är programmet Zoom (<https://zoom.us>) för videokonferenser och seminarier. Det är ett bra program, som är lätt att använda för ändamål som DESScafé och lätt att installera på datorer och mobiltelefoner. Jazz Society använder samma program för sina veckomöten. Det finns enkla handledningar om hur man installerar och använder Zoom i DESScaféavdelningen och caféteamet hjälper till att lösa problem och ge tränning.

Väl mött i DESScafé!

*Ulf Lundin*

## Ray Carman in memoriam

Ray Carman var ingen musiker eller musikolog men han var en sann Ellingtonbeundrare. Han var under ett flertal år ordförande i vår systerförening i New York, DETS, Inc. En syssla som han skötte med stor förträfflighet. DETS, Inc. har under alla år gett ut ett månatligt nyhetsbrev och ofta har vi, som varit medlemmar i föreningen, fått ta del av Rays mycket insiktsfulla betraktelser om olika företeelser i Duke Ellingtons långa karriär. Vi har kunnat läsa om hans personliga erfarenheter av och synpunkter på Irving Mills, Johnny Hodges, Harry Carney och naturligtvis på Duke själv. Med Rays medgivande har vi återgett flera av dessa artiklar i våra Bulletiner.



Jag hade nöjet att få träffa och lära känna Ray vid Ellingtonkonferensen i New York 2016. Han var lätt att prata med och han berättade med inlevelse om sin uppväxt i Harlem och det inflytande jazzen hade på honom. Jag minns särskilt att han betonade vilket stort inflytande de latinska intrycken hade över jazzen på 1940/50-talet, något som jag inte var helt medveten om, men som jag senare förstått att han hade helt rätt i.

Ray Carman gick bort den 9 september 2020 i en ålder av 85 år. Hans bortgång är en stor förlust inte bara för hans familj utan även för DETS, Inc. och alla andra Ellingtonföreningar.

*Bo Haufman*

# Louis Metcalf

## A forgotten Ellingtonian

By Bo Haufman

Many trumpet players have passed through the Duke Ellington Orchestra over the years. Several of them rank among the best in jazz history, but several are more obscure. Louis Metcalf may not be considered obscure, but he may be a bit forgotten today. Metcalf's engagement with the Ellington band may in hindsight be seen as being unlucky. He was employed as second trumpet player together with Bubber Miley. It seems that he had expected to be featured as the competent soloist he was, but Ellington allotted most solo time to Miley, which in the end led to Metcalf leaving the band.

When studying the Ellington discography, one finds Louis Metcalf's name as early as November 29, 1926, when Duke Ellington and his Kentucky Club Orchestra recorded *East St. Louis Toodle-Oo* and *Birmingham Breakdown* for Vocalion. This makes one believe that Metcalf was a member of the Washingtonians and was playing at the Kentucky Club, but that was not the case. Metcalf never played at this venue but was called in by Ellington just for the recording. The same goes for a number of recordings by the Washingtonians, recorded in late 1926 and early 1927.

When Duke Ellington commenced his engagement at the Cotton Club on December 4, 1927, Louis Metcalf was employed by Sam Wooding, who was running a band that was at the time a more established band than Duke Ellington's Orchestra. His engagement with Wooding allowed him to double with Ellington, whose show at the Cotton Club didn't start until late in the evening. Interestingly, when Sam Wooding was planning for a tour of Europe, Metcalf decided not to go along and was instead employed by Ellington. In an interview Metcalf described the situation as follows:



"During this period (1926-27) I was filling recording gigs with Duke Ellington. I was not a member of Duke's band. It was during my last month with Sam Wooding that I got the opportunity to double with Duke in regular engagements at the Cotton Club. This was the time that Duke increased his personnel from his original six to eleven men. After finishing my early theatre engagement with Wooding I went over to the Cotton Club 11 o'clock show to play the engagement. About this time Wooding was planning for another European trip and it could have been that I may have made the trip with him, but my eye was on the Duke. My wish came true. I got my chance to become a regular member of Duke's

band. I opened with Duke's first show at the Cotton Club. The band had a much fuller sound owing to the increase in personnel. This band was a futuristic outfit. He was way out for those days and his was the sound to hear. I guess it was the dream of every young musician then to try to get a berth with Duke's outfit."

### Early life

Louis Metcalf was born on February 28, 1905, in Webster Groves, Missouri, a suburb of St. Louis. His father was a minister and a deeply religious man who had hopes that his only son would follow in his footsteps. It was in the church, with its gospel singing, that he began to appreciate music and started to practice the

drums. However, his father disapproved the choice of instrument and Louis gave up drumming and switched to the cornet. Louis took lessons and quickly developed into a capable player and he soon, as a teenager, got to play with Charlie Creath and his band in St. Louis. He was later discovered by an orchestra leader by the name of Jimmie Cooper and in 1923, at the age of seventeen, he joined his band and moved to New York. This happened against his father's approval. Jimmie Cooper's band was kind of a revue band and they travelled all over the country performing their show.

After a year with the Jimmie Cooper revue, Louis got tired of the constant travelling and decided to leave the band and remain in New York. His position in the band was taken over by none other than Rex Stewart. Louis had no job, but at this time there existed a club in New York called The Rhythm Club, where musicians used to meet and jam together. During this time, Louis took part in several recordings accompanying various blues singers, often in company with Bubber Miley. At The Rhythm Club, he met Willie "The Lion" Smith and they played together occasionally for a couple of months, but in 1925 he joined Andy Preer and his Orchestra which was playing at the well reputed Cotton Club. Metcalf recorded with this band on January 6, 1925. He stayed with Preer for about five months, after which he joined Johnny Hudgins, a popular musical comedian, with whom he appeared at the Club Alabam. This engagement allowed him to double with Elmer Snowden's band. In this band also played the trumpeter Harry Cooper, who had a short stint with Duke Ellington. Together they tried to develop a sound similar to that of King Oliver/Louis Armstrong. Recordings were made on July 3 and November 24, 1925.

### Joining Duke Ellington

Louis Metcalf's time with Duke Ellington ran from the fall of 1926 until June 1928 and coincided with that of Bubber Miley's. The latter was Ellington's prime trumpet-star with an inventive plunger technique. His musical ideas had a lasting impression on Ellington and would

affect Duke's view of music for the rest of his life. Needless to say, Louis Metcalf was overshadowed by Miley and he served mainly as the second trumpeter. However, he was not without solo spots on records, but what is interesting to note is that the majority of them took place during Metcalf's last few months with the orchestra. We can only speculate as to why that happened. Maybe he was complaining about never being featured, resulting in Duke giving him some increased exposure. Inez Cavanaugh said in an interview; "that Metcalf quit because he felt he wasn't getting enough solo parts and that's when Freddy Jenkins came into the band."

recording as often as they were." Lawrence further says: "Metcalf showed no rancor towards Ellington, in fact, he said the time he spent in the band was a great learning experience."

### Recordings

For obvious reasons, Louis Metcalf's solo performances on Ellington records are sparse. On February 3, 1927, Duke Ellington and his Kentucky Club Orchestra recorded two numbers for Vocalion: *New Orleans Low Down* and *Song of the Cotton Fields*. Metcalf can be heard over a few bars, but it is Bubber Miley and Joe Nanton, who deliver the interesting solos.

On December 19, 1927, *Harlem River*



Louis Metcalf fronting his International Band.

According the A.H. Lawrence ("Duke Ellington and his world". Routledge, NYK): "Metcalf was the only one of the band members to question Irving Mills's complete control over them. He felt that the band should incorporate, as the Casa Loma Orchestra did, but that idea fell on deaf ears. Metcalf was probably unaware of Ellington's contract with their manager. Even if he was, the other Washingtonians had fully accepted the fact that Mills had become a powerful force in their musical lives. Because of him they had one of the best jobs in town, and no other band around, black or white, was

*Quiver* was recorded and Metcalf can be heard with a good solo over twelve bars. At the same session *Blue Bubbles* was also put on wax with a six-bar solo by Metcalf. It is, however, again Bubber Miley who is stealing the show together with Harry Carney on both alto- and soprano sax.

On January 9, 1928, the Washingtonians were in Columbia's studio, recording for *Harmony Stack O'Lee Blues* and *Bugle Call Rag*. Metcalf takes the first chorus on *Stack O'Lee Blues* and does it quite well. The second number is a show off for all members of the band and Metcalf's

contribution is as good as the others.

In March, 1928, Duke Ellington records *Jubilee Stomp* on three different occasions. The recording for Brunswick on March 21 is of special interest. On this recording session Bubber Miley was not available and Louis Metcalf takes over the solo that was normally allotted to Miley. Metcalf's solo is probably his best during his time with Ellington. Even though his style was molded after Louis Armstrong, it is evident that he was also influenced by Bubber Miley and his solo includes a few growl effects. On this session, a version of *Take It Easy* was recorded but regrettably Metcalf only had a solo for a few bars, which was too short to allow him enough room for expression.

On June 25, 1928, Louis Metcalf made his last recording with Duke Ellington. On that last recording, he made some short inputs on *Yellow Dog Blues* and a good twelve-bar solo on *Tishomingo Blues*.

In his book "A Listener's Guide" Eddie Lambert describes Louis Metcalf with the following words:

"During the two years trumpeter Louis Metcalf spent in the Ellington Orchestra he was generally overshadowed by his section mate Bubber Miley. At this time Metcalf was a young follower of the King Oliver school, content to play in the manner of his mentor rather than to advance the style into unknown territory as Miley was doing. His solos are much less distinguished than Miley's; although his playing is pleasant and relaxed, it lacks the spirit and personality of Bubber's work. There are a few characteristic Metcalf solos on the Ellington records, but he was in the band too early for Ellington to have been able to utilize fully the potential of a rather modest and limited stylist."

### Leaving Duke Ellington

After having left Duke Ellington and his Orchestra, Louis Metcalf joined Jelly Roll Morton where he happened to play together with Russell Procope. By the end of 1928 he was engaged by King Oliver and made several recordings with him. At this time Oliver's teeth problems often prevented him from playing and on the records it is mostly Metcalf



Members of Luis Russell's Orchestra. Standing: William "Bass" More, J.C. Higginbotham, Paul Barbarin, Will Johnson. Sitting: Louis Metcalf, Luis Russell, Teddy Hill.

taking the trumpet solos. He left Oliver in the beginning of 1929, and was engaged by Luis Russell, occasionally playing at Connie's Inn and Savoy Ballroom. However, later that year, he went with Vernon Andrade who was the main stay at the Renaissance Ballroom in Harlem. Metcalf had a lot of positive words to say about Andrade's band. He said that when they battled other bands they won over bands like Chick Webb, Bennie Moten and Cab Calloway.

However, his stay with Andrade was relatively short lived and he then started his own band. In Klaus Stratemann's "Day by Day", it is mentioned that on September 21, 1929, he appeared with his orchestra at a charity event at a place called New Star Casino in New York. With this band he made his first trip to Montreal, Canada, where he stayed for three years. For the next few years he appeared with his band at various venues around New York.

In 1935 Fletcher Henderson got an engagement at the Harlem Opera House, but for various reasons he was without a band. Metcalf and his band happened to be free and Henderson took over his band. After the Harlem Opera gig, they toured the countryside around New York. The band didn't play Metcalf's book but rather Fletcher Henderson's

compositions and arrangements, many of which would later find their way into Benny Goodman's repertoire. Henderson would later give up band leading and started to work for Goodman, which resulted in Metcalf taking back the leadership of the band. However, engagement opportunities became scarce and he disbanded after some time and went back to his hometown St. Louis. While there he played on one of the riverboats, which was something that he always dreamed of doing during his childhood.

Shortly thereafter, he was on the move again and headed for Chicago, and here we can find him recording with Richard M. Jones' Chicago Cosmopolitans on September 13, 1935. While in Chicago he formed a band with which he played around Chicago. It didn't last too long and he soon returned to New York and The Renaissance Casino where he ran a show of his own in 1936. According to Metcalf, he occasionally employed such names as Billie Holiday, Hot Lips Page and Lester Young amongst others.

### Club owner

In 1940 Metcalf's father passed away and he inherited a small restaurant that his father had been running. He found it necessary to keep on running the restaurant, but soon turned it into a jazz club

named "Heat Wave", where he arranged jam sessions at which many of the big jazz personalities of the day appeared. Metcalf ran the club for several years and simultaneously he involved himself in the issue of a magazine called "The Music Dial". The magazine became a platform for Afro-Americans to stand up for their rights, and it became the first such magazine to be recognized before Ebony and Jet Magazine came on the scene. Unfortunately, the limitation of printing paper during the war years caused him to discontinue the magazine.

The "Heat Wave" club suffered some unfortunate incidents which resulted in the closing down of the club. This resulted in Metcalf taking the house band on a tour around the Eastern states but he encountered some difficulties. The small night clubs, where he mostly played, faced problems during the war with the supply of electricity, causing them to close early, which hampered business and in the end led to his disbanding.

### Going to Canada

Previously, Louis Metcalf had a good experience in Montreal, and in December 1946 he moved there and quickly formed a band he called his "International Band". The band consisted of quite a few members with non-US passports, hence the name of the band. Until then, the musical offerings in Montreal consisted mainly of Dixieland jazz and similar styles, but Metcalf introduced to the public elements of the new kind of jazz that had been recently established – Be-Bop. His band was much appreciated and was something of a sensation, but he admitted that the repertoire at concerts had to include some Dixieland numbers. Over these years in Montreal his style as a trumpeter developed and he became more modern compared to his Ellington days. The band was a main stay at the club Café Saint-Michel, which was the hub of the jazz scene in Montreal. Often local musicians like Oscar Peterson and Maynard Ferguson sat in, as did visiting Americans like Art Pepper, Sonny Rollins and Fats Navarro. Metcalf tried to bring his band to the USA but US Immigration authorities would not grant them permission, despite the fact that

many American bands of fame had regularly toured Canada at this time. He was to spend a total of six years in Montreal leading his International Band.

### Returning to USA

When Louis Metcalf returned to New York in 1951, he was a musical veteran with thirty years of experience. His musical adventures had taken him through some of the greatest bands and finest shows. His feelings now were to settle down and take account of all his past experiences and to think of a secure future. He formed a small combo and over the following years he played at venues like Lou Terrassi's, Stuyvesant Casino, Embers, Jimmy Ryan's, Manor and similar venues where more traditional jazz was regularly presented. He spent a total of

spanning two weeks he played together with local bands in an early jazz style at various clubs in Malmö, Lund and Copenhagen. At this time in life his health was beginning to deteriorate, but the enthusiasts anyhow enjoyed his playing. Paul Strandberg, a Swedish cornetist who accompanied Metcalf during his tour, interviewed Metcalf about his early days. He was told about the St. Louis trumpeter Charlie Creath and about Louis Armstrong's introduction to West End Blues. Metcalf said that King Oliver had this intro put down on paper and requested young Metcalf to learn it for a recording session. He also mentioned the difficulties with Fletcher Henderson's arrangements with the many key changes. Needless to say he also talked about his time with Duke Ellington. Metcalf's tour only covered Sweden and Denmark and no other European countries were visited before his return to USA.

### Recordings under own name

Except for the LP mentioned above, Louis Metcalf's recordings as a bandleader were very minimal. In 1954/55 he recorded as "Louis Metcalf and his All Stars" for the label Franwill. It seems like these records were only issued as 78s or possibly 45s. His "All Stars" consisted of Eddie Barefield (cl.), Alva McCain (ts), Garvin Bushell (bars.), Kenny Kersey (p), Lord Westbrook (g), Lamont Moten (b.) and Cozy Cole (dr). In 1958 he made a number of Dixieland type recordings for the label Stereo-O-Craft which likewise seem to be 45s. He was surrounded by a.o. Gene Sedric and Prince Robinson. Finally an LP was issued on Pickwick AKS215 with Louis Metcalf sometime in 1963/64 accompanied by Hank Jones (p.), Al Hall (b.) and Osie Johnson (dr.).

His final record appearance was made in 1979, when he together with a quartet accompanied the blues singer Brenda Bell on "Brenda Bell Sings the Blues of Victoria Spivey", which was released on Spivey SP1024.

Louis Metcalf passed away on October 27, 1981. He was survived by his wife Shirley and their five children. With his long career on the jazz scene, he is probably best remembered for his days with Duke Ellington.



four years at the Metropole, close to Times Square. During these years he played together with many ex Ellington alumni, such as Sonny Greer, Tyree Glenn and Alva Beau McCain as well as many other musicians with good reputation.

During the 1960s he led the house band at the club Ali Baba for several years. An LP was made called "Louis Metcalf at the Ali Baba" (Spivey LP1007) where he is surrounded by a quintet and with Victoria Spivey as the vocalist. In 1969 he got seriously ill, but then fortunately recovered and continued to lead a band of his own for a few more years.

### Visiting Sweden

On the initiative of Danish and Swedish jazz fans Louis Metcalf together with his bassist Buck Jones were invited to Sweden in August 1976. Over a period