



Duke Ellington  
Society of Sweden

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*"The Frog"*

*In this issue  
we present a  
portrait of Ben  
Webster written  
in a personal  
way by  
Steve Wallace.*



# Vårnyheter!

I vårt förra nummer av Bulletinen hade vi glädjande nog två nya medlemmar att hälsa välkomna och i detta nummer kan vi meddela att vi åter har fått två nya medlemmar. Men tyvärr minskar medlemskaderen undan för undan och det är mycket tråkigt att konstatera.

Fjärde måndagen i februari hade vi årsmöte. I år avgick Key Jigerström som ledamot av styrelsen. Han har varit medlem sedan DESS startade sin verksamhet 1994. Som ledamot av styrelsen invaldes han 2004. Key var bland annat den som engagerade orkestrar under åren då vi höll till på f.d. Gyllene Cirkeln och som mötte stor uppskattning. Medlemsantalet ökade under de åren, men verksamheten kunde inte fortsätta på grund av för stora kostnader. Under senare år har han varit ansvarig för vår websida. Ett stort tack Key för Din insats för DESS under en lång följd av år.

Till ersättare för Key valdes en gammal bekant, nämligen Göran Wallén. Han behöver väl ingen presentation. Göran var vår ordförande de första 10 åren och det var tack vare honom som vi kunde arrangera de mycket lyckade och välarrangerade Duke Ellingtonkonferenserna 1994 och 2004. Nu är han med igen och med sin erfarenhet och sitt vittförgrenade kontaktnät kommer han att vara till stor nytta för DESS.

Jag vill även tacka Björn Englund för hans insatser i bulletinredaktionen som han nu valt att lämna. Han har under sin tid i redaktionen

bidragit med insiktsfulla artiklar av diskografisk natur. Vi hoppas och tror att vi framdeles kan konsultera Björn när diskografiska problem uppstår.

I förra numret rapporterade jag om de tankar som finns på att ge klubben närvaro på Facebook i syfte att ge klubben ett ansikte där och stimulera kontakten och utbyten mellan medlemmarna och mellan medlemmar och andra Ellingtonintresserade. Det arbetet har gått vidare och olika lösningar för en Facebook-grupp har studerats. De testas för närvarande och om allt fungerar väl bör det finnas en DESS-grupp på Facebook inom kort.

Styrelsen har också gett klartecken för att klubben skall arbeta fram en ny hemsida. Key Jigerström, som i många år gjort ett uppoffrande arbete för att hålla hemsidan igång, har av sagt sig den uppgiften. Men när vi nu tackar Key för vad han gjort är det naturligt att vi också funderar över innehållet, utseendet och funktionen med en hemsida. Ett förslag till hemsida eller snarare webbplats håller nu på att testas. Allt som nu finns på DESS hemsida skall finnas på den nya webbplatsen. Men tanken är också att ge den en starkare inriktning mot nyhetsinformation med möjlighet för medlemmar som är intresserade att lägga in eget material. Webbplatsen kommer också att ha medlemsrum med ett Ellington-arkiv av musik, video, foto och artiklar där DESS medlemmar kan botanisera fritt och ladda ner till den egna datorn eller smartphonen. När

utprovningsen är avklarad och alla beslut har fattats läggs webbplatsen upp och ellington.se får ett nytt utseende. Det kan komma att ske före nästa medlemsmöte. Ulf Lundin har varit föreningen synnerligen behjälplig i utformandet av den nya webbplatsen och kommer framdeles att ha en central roll i hanteringen av densamma.

Som vi nämnde i förra bulletinen kommer vi i år åter att ge ut en ny CD till Er. Den kommer att innehålla inspelningar från ett speciellt välkänt place..., som jag inte vill avslöja nu. Det förblir en hemlighet tills Ni får CDn fram emot jul. Men vi tror att den kommer att bli uppskattad, inte minst tack vare det utmärkta ljudet som uppnåtts på denna skiva. Gå därför inte miste om denna gåva, för **Du har väl inte glömt att betala in årets medlemsavgift, 250:-, på vårt bankgirokonto 211-3207 som ersätter vårt tidigare plusgirokonto. Har Du inte betalat in din medlemsavgift den 1 juni, stryks Du ur medlemslistan och det blir ingen CD. Det vore väl synd!**



Leif Jönsson,  
ordförande i DESS



## Snålblåst på årsmötet och trist efterbörd i kvällens konsert

Det blåste kallt på årsmötet den 22 februari när en gammal surdeg vädrades vid val av en ny gammal styrelsemedlem. Ett ovanligt drama för DESS, som dock löstes efter viss parlamentarisk förvirring. Mer om årsmötet på annan plats, för sedan började medlemsmötet med numera rätt obligatoriska rekvisita.

Först några bidrag ur Anders Asp-lunds outtömliga kollektion av Ellington på film, där jag med särskild förtjusning noterade Rolf Ericson på bild i Rockin' In Rhythm från en Englandsturné 1964.

Trevligt stoff, men nog vore det värt en grundligare kommentar för att ge publiken en merupplevelse.

Sedan var det musik av en kvartett med trumpetaren Jan Stolpe som ledande namn. Det föreföll som klubbkamraterna omkring mig gillade framträdandet, vilket också har bestyrkts av de mejl som nått mig. De flesta av dessa mejl tycks främst vara ämnade att stärka styrelsens självuppfattning av gjorda insatser men innehåller också värderande omdömen om musik och musiker. Det händer inte sällan att mina egna åsikter går stick i stäv med vad som framförs av dessa recensenter. Det står dem helt fritt att delge mig sina tankar men jag måste få sagt att det också besvärar mig så länge jag har uppdraget att formulera mig i Bulletinen.

Som nu! Jag kan nämligen inte se mycket försonande i kvällens konsert. Orkesterledaren var uppenbart ur form. Det



Foto: Sonja Svensson

betyder mycket för en kvartett och kan inte helt kompenseras av att den rutinerade och välformulerade Calle Lundborg tog allt sitt tillvara när chanserna gavs. I den stillsamt reserverade stil som är hans. Udda och fångslande var basisten Magnus Marcks, som originellt nog prövade sig på *In A Sentimental Mood* med stråkens hjälp och vann publiken och mig med ett av kvällens bästa nummer. Nog sagt för denna gång ...

Bo Holmqvist

## CLAES ENGLUND

På tisdagsmorgonen den 29 mars får vi beskedet att vår nära och mycket käre vän Claes Englund gått ur tiden. Vän och klasskamrat sedan tidigt 50-tal, student- och DESS-kompis och med ett helt liv tillsammans. Claes drabbades lördagen den 19 mars av en hjärtinfarkt som visade sig vara lätt, men han fick tillbringa söndagen, som var hans 77:e födelsedag, på sjukhuset. Allt hade gått bra och i två samtal med honom den gångna veckan var han fylld av tillförsikt, och vi skissade på lämpliga dagar för att ses och skriva inbjudan till studentklassen för det årliga mötet den 20 maj ("Vi" är 3/4-delar av organisationskommittén). Men så på långfredagen drabbades han av en tydligen rejäl stroke som han inte överlevde. Nedanstående skrivet i någon slags sorgens bedövning.

Claes var född den 20 mars 1939 i Uppsala, där han gick i folkskolan och därefter i Högre allmänna läroverket, det som numer kallas Katedralskolan, där hans far var lektor i kemi. 1957 tog han studenten tillsammans med oss och gjorde sedan sin militärtjänst i Kustartilleriet. Han gick vidare till Uppsala universitet för att studera filosofi med estetik som huvudämne, för Teddy Brunius.

Claes var mycket teaterintresserad. Efter avslutade studier började han arbeta på Riksteatern och blev redaktör för deras tidskrift *Entré* (eller *entré* som man stavade den). 1969 blev han en kort tid chef för Västerås Länsteater, knuten till Riksteatern. Därefter återgick han till redaktörsjobbet och kom att följa svensk och internationell teater i hundratals artiklar och intervjuer. Efter sin pensionering fick han uppdraget att skriva Riksteaterns historia. Därefter blev uppdrag för teatern allt färre, något som han sörjde, eftersom han hade både lust och stor förmåga att skriva.

Den lusten fick han utlopp för, efter att vi som nya medlemmar efter Ellingtonkonferensen 1994 tagit med honom i DESS. Om någon skulle vara medlem så var det ju Claes. Han var ett levande uppslagsverk vad gällde klassisk jazz, beläst på jazzlitteratur och våra diskussioner inte minst



## IN MEMORIAM

vad gäller preferenser började i skolan och har fortsatt alltsedan dess (sic). Med Bulletinen började han arbeta 2010 vilket medförde en kvalitetshöjning, som också bidragit till tidningens numer goda rykte, även utomlands. Han kunde bedöma kvaliteten på föreslaget material och visste hur både det svenska och det engelska språket skulle behandlas på bästa sätt. Hans språkgranskning var fenomenal. Han hade mängder av idéer och förslag till texter, och idéer från andra i redaktionen mottog han alltid med stor entusiasm.

Claes kunde sin Duke. Detta kom alltid till uttryck i de artiklar som ingick i en lång serie som han kallade "Other Duke's Places". När det gällde själva musiken var det speciellt trummisarnas insatser han ville bedöma. Han visste hur en trumma skulle bära upp ett storband och han höll en gång ett mycket uppskattat anförande i ämnet på ett av DESS medlemsmöten. Det blev senare även en artikel i ett nummer av Bulletinen. I detta nummer av tidningen ingår en artikel där Claes behandlar några av Ellington's trummisar.

Claes hade också ett intresse för bildkonst och en betydande begåvning för teckning och måleri. Men efter skoltiden vägrade han att utveckla denna, med hänvisning till att hans yngre bror var en professionell och utmärkt bildkonstnär.

Det är omöjligt att på några rader sammanfatta ett helt livs intressanta erfarenheter, diskussioner, upptäckter, skratt och bekymmer, men vi bär honom med oss resten av våra liv.

Våra tankar går till hans hustru Susanne, och barnen Johan, Hedda, Petter och Leo.

Norrtälje och Uppsala den 29 mars 2016  
vännerna Leif Klitze och P.O. Sporrang

# Ben Webster

## *The Heart of the Matter*

By Steve Wallace

*Ben Webster fell under the spell of Coleman Hawkins' ground-breaking tenor saxophone style early in his career, but eventually discovered himself and largely formed his own style by about 1938. Shortly after this he found a setting as perfect for him as the Count Basie band was for Lester Young – the Duke Ellington Orchestra, from 1940-43.*

His time with Ellington and especially the exposure to Johnny Hodges further shaped him. Hawkins may have been Webster's original model, but Hodges and another great alto saxophonist – Ben's lifelong friend Benny Carter – were his biggest influences. From Carter he learned breath control and to smooth out his phrasing with more legato, from Hodges he learned how to project emotion by using glissandi and imbuing his sound with an endlessly nuanced vibrato.

Even the Ellington band couldn't contain his Promethian temper for long and he left in a huff after an altercation with Duke in 1943. His style evolved somewhat after this in small ways as he and his life changed, but he never really embraced bebop or other aspects of modernism in jazz, his playing remained essentially the same and true to itself.

### In perspective

This individuality was celebrated in the 1950s, when Webster found an ideal outlet in the touring Jazz at the Philharmonic troupes and the attendant record labels (Clef, Norgran, Verve) founded by Norman Granz. His many recordings from that time capture him in a kind of golden middle period and moved critics and listeners alike to belatedly place Webster alongside Hawkins and Young in a triumvirate of classic jazz tenors. By 1960 though, the Granz/Verve forum dried up for Webster and he suddenly faced being a lonely, anachronistic footnote. He was seriously out of step with the young men who were increasingly setting the pace on his horn in those years: Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane, later Joe Henderson

and Wayne Shorter. By the early '60s, his playing seemed badly out of fashion and, finding work scarce and perhaps feeling marginalized in America, he exiled himself to Europe, in search of a fresh start and a new audience for his saxophone musings, never to return home.



But the passing of decades allows the dust of events and trends to settle, can bring the perspective of distance so that we can see things – history, ourselves, art – more clearly. Listening to Webster now, he is perhaps the most timeless of jazz players, he never sounds remotely dated and sweeps aside considerations of style, period, "schools" and genres as the tri-

bles they mostly are. Ben Webster is forever, his playing defies age by being truly beautiful and wholly original. Beauty is never irrelevant and originality cannot die. He achieved this singular, poetic beauty by wedding the twin pillars of his colossal playing: his incomparable, magnificent tone and his very direct communication of real emotion.

### Style

It's hard to find words to describe his sound, yet they could fill volumes. The gruff-to-tender tone he produced from his saxophone Betsy was with him all of his life, it was his domain and his palette – majestic, sumptuous, roomy, sensuous, a slab of mahogany wrapped in velvet. At medium tempos, it billowed, furled and swayed like a huge sail in the wind. On ballads it purred, whispered and caressed, sometimes fading to a mere breathy exhalation. On up-tempo songs or slow blues numbers it was the roar and snarl of a provoked lion, his tenor sounding like metal on metal, a Cadillac engine badly in need of an oil change. In a single solo, Webster could start out sounding as light and fluffy as a soufflé, move to a medium volume with a vibrato that neighed like a horse, offer some savage parrot squawks or dragon roars, then slither like a boa constrictor back to the floating meringue again. If, as Zoot Sims once put it, Stan Getz was "a nice bunch of guys", then Ben Webster as an entire menagerie, his saxophone a vessel of sound along the lines of Noah's Ark.

Webster's command of his sound – and his vibrato and dynamics – was absolute and shaped his playing. The sheer luxurious mass of it allowed him to play very simply and slowly; with a sound like this he couldn't play very fast, nor did he need to. His focus on tone colour allowed him to work in broad strokes and handle big matters. His solos were oratorical, a series of dramatic pronouncements, melodic statements and shapes rather than lines, with large swatches of space and silence left between these. He didn't generate time so much as he filled it, straddling the rhythm section underneath him, floating on top of their beat like the absurdly tiny hats he wore perched atop his massive head. For this reason, Ben always sounded his best with good pianists and rhythm sections, he needed them to generate momentum and make his pauses sound better. He played the piano (his first instrument) quite well



*Duke, Ben and Jimmy Hamilton seem to discuss some tricky passage for the reeds.*

and idolized great pianists like Teddy Wilson, Art Tatum, Jimmy Rowles (a lifelong friend), Oscar Peterson, Jimmy Jones, Hank Jones and Joe Zawinul.

In certain registers during his more lyrical moods, he could sound uncannily like a string instrument. He tended to play lower on the tenor in the 1940s and sometimes sounded like a cello, albeit one on steroids. In the '50s he played higher on the horn and especially on ballads could sound for all the world like a viola. It was not only the warm woodiness of the timbre but the vibrato and phrasing, the sustain that resembled bowing. This may have resulted from studying the violin as a child, but whatever the reason, it was a unique feature of his playing.

## Comparisons

His rich menu of sound constantly served the conveyance of feeling, which is what his playing is all about. He felt things very deeply – tenderness, rage, nostalgia, joy, yearning, loneliness, absent friends, homesickness – and these feelings were never far from the surface of his music. Though he had perfect pitch, he often played with deliberately blurred or wide intonation – his notes were in tune at the centre, but were often surrounded by an English of moving air, some fur or fuzziness. I pity anyone trying to transcribe one of his solos, because he rarely played a 'straight' note, his were often bent or suffused with a whole range of inflection.

They were more like sounds than notes – and in these sounds lie his emotional transparency, his openness. His playing acquired the properties of language, of human speech. Other saxophonists offered virtuosity and musical thought, fast, complex lines full of harmonic and rhythmic brinksmanship. They played ideas, whereas Ben seemed to play the shapes of feelings, tone-syllables which talk directly to us. And more than any other saxophonist, with the possible exception of Lester Young, Ben Webster seems to offer us his heart itself, as if to say, "Here it is on a silver platter, take it."

Such emotional directness cannot become dated, because feelings are essentially what humans have experienced each and every day, forever. Who among us has not known the longing for lost friends, the joy of Christmas morning as a child, the thrill of first love, the heartbreak of romantic rejection, the self-doubt of failure, the ache of loneliness, the despair of aging? How can these be irrelevant? Not while Ben Webster speaks to all of these feeling and more, he doesn't wallow in them; his playing offers sentiment, but is never sentimental. He stops short of the cloying or mawkish by being utterly sincere and devoid of self-pity, by achieving a kind of beautiful and passionate honesty. It also helped that at any moment he was fully capable of producing a note that could blow you halfway across the room; his playing captures your attention and keeps you on your toes.

## Ben Interlude #1

*Ben Webster had the habit of sometimes tailing a note off to just a tiny puff or breath, finishing it with a miraculous sotto voce vibrato. It sounded like this – phuff-ffff-ff-fff-ff-ff-ff...f.. He was living in Los Angeles in the late '50s and work was scarce, but when he did work it was often with a marvellous band – Jimmy Rowles on piano, Jim Hall on guitar, Red Mitchell or Leroy Vinnegar on bass and Frank Butler on drums. They played at a club called The Renaissance and one night Butler called the young Billy Higgins to sub for him on drums. Higgins, only about eighteen, was both excited and nervous about this chance to*



work with such a master and wanted to play as considerately as possible for the elder Ben – he decided he would use brushes almost exclusively. The first number as at a slow-medium tempo and Billy was stirring away with his brushes on the snare drum when, halfway through his first chorus, Ben turned around and gruffly barked “Sticks, kid!” out of the



side of his mouth. Billy, a little startled, switched to sticks and the ride cymbal.

The same thing happened whenever Ben played on the next couple of numbers, which were a little faster. Finally, Ben called a ballad and Billy figured he'd have to let him play brushes on this one. But no, eight bars into the melody, Ben leaned aside and snarled out “Sticks!” again, Billy couldn't believe it. When the set was over, he was confused and a little hurt, he thought he'd played quite well. He decided to ask Ben about it and approached him. “Gee, Mr. Webster, don't you like the way I play brushes?” Ben answered, “Huh? Naah, it ain't that, kid. You play just fine. But the shwoo, shwoo, shwoo from you brushes is getting' in the way of the foo, foo, ff-foo coming' out my horn.”

## First impression

I'll never forget becoming fully aware of Ben's greatness for the first time. It happened in a car sometimes in 1977, though I knew of him before that and had probably heard him a little in passing. Pianist George McFetridge and I worked regularly near the Toronto Airport that year and one night we were riding home in

George's car and he popped in a cassette tape, saying, “This is a long Ben Webster track, it might last all the way home.” (I had no idea at the time what record this was from, but I've since come to know it – *Ben Webster and Associates*, an all-star affair from 1959.) A good-sized band began playing Ellington's *In A Mellotone* at a perfectly relaxed medium tempo, with at least two tenors and a trumpet playing the melody and Webster answering them with improvised countermelodies. This was followed by a long series of solos, most of them lasting two choruses. Unusually, the bass led off – Ray Brown – brilliant, but a little hard to hear over the car engine. Next was piano and I distinctly remember George saying it was Hank Jones, but it's actually Jimmy Jones, followed by a slightly diffident guitar chorus by Les Spann. Then came two choruses from a tenor player I didn't recognize, who used some double-time and other impressive boppish touches. (It's Budd Johnson, who's become one of my favourites. He wasn't supposed to be on this date, but Ben stopped off at a bar on the way to the studio for a drink and saw Budd and immediately asked him to join as a guest on the session. This was entirely typical of Ben and appropriate because they were very old and dear friends. They met sometime in the late '20s in Amarillo, Texas, where Ben was working as a silent-movie pianist in a local theatre. Ben was interested in learning to play the saxophone and had bought

an old tenor and Budd gave him his first lessons and pointers on the horn, so this was payback.) Next I recognized the urgent, buzzing rasp of Roy Eldridge and as he always does, Roy dialled the heat up a couple of notches. I'd scarcely recovered from this when Coleman Hawkins entered in all his thundering and magisterial glory; by now the groove and intensity had reached mythic proportions, but still no Ben Webster. There was a drum interlude from Jo Jones and at last, after being a cordial host (after you, fellas) or perhaps thinking he'd save the best for last, Big Ben entered the fray.

Even then, I was aware of Ben's combative bravado, and in this competitive arena I expected him to take the gloves off and come out swinging right off the bat, but no, he began with disarming restraint, which I at first mistook for tentativeness. Even holding back like this, his tone was riveting; it went “Vrrooooouuwwlllll” and sounded like the voice of God. In his first chorus he almost toyed with the song's chords and the beat, playing some very interesting and dissonant harmonic ideas, with unusual and angular shapes, building steam. He uttered some pretty savage roars in his second chorus, but contrasted these with some oblique, sideways murmurings. When he was finished, I was literally blown away by his control and utter mastery, the audaciously original imagination at work here. Whether he was trying to or not (and I rather suspect he was), Ben had effecti-



vely used the building excitement of all the wonderful playing preceding him as preamble and cannon fodder, sweeping some very powerful players aside as almost incidental, irrelevant. He didn't do so with the exertion of force and muscle as I expected, but rather with guile and insinuating subtlety; his playing seemed to imply as much as it directly stated. I was surprised by the avant-garde abstraction of his solo, it was almost like cubist painting in its bold manipulation of big shapes and contours and I thought of Ben as being the Picasso of jazz. One thing I knew for sure after this, I had to hear some more of him, and soon.

Fortunately, it was easy to find his records as Verve, following in the footsteps of other labels, began issuing "two-fers" from their vaults around then. I found and bought three of these by Webster from the fifties. One paired his two LPs with Oscar Peterson, another his two meetings with Coleman Hawkins and a third was called Ballads and mostly featured Ben's sumptuous playing with strings. These were the records that made me fall in love with his playing and I've been smitten ever since. Eventually, I backtracked and digested his classic playing with Ellington's band, though I didn't do that entirely until CD reissues were in full swing by the early '90s.

## A rediscovery

I was mostly moved to write this piece on Ben by a strange and surprising discovery in my CD collection this past fall. One day, to borrow Ellington's phrase, I had a "yen for Ben" and went over to the Webster shelf looking for some of his records to play. I spotted a three-CD set on Definitive called *Ben Webster: The Complete Small Group Recordings, 1943-51*, which I'd forgotten all about. I vaguely remember buying it and surely I must have listened to it, but it felt like new information to me. So, into the CD player went the three discs and there they stayed, I scarcely listened to anything else for about two weeks. His playing throughout was a revelation, by turns dramatic, lyrical, ghostly, moving, raging and above all, exciting.

This set is invaluable because in one place, it offers the almost forgotten and unknown Ben Webster, filling in the blanks between his time with Ellington, which made his reputation, and his Verve period, which crowned it. In many



ways, the mid '40s were his peak, but for years his records from then were hard to find, because they were mostly 78s and not issued as albums. This set offers five sessions led by Webster, one co-led with Big Sid Catlett and six others with such illustrious leaders as James P. Johnson, Pete Johnson (his old Kansas City buddy and piano teacher), Teddy Wilson, Benny Morton, Cozy Cole and Benny Carter, plus three led by very good but lesser-known musicians – Walter "Foots" Thomas, Al Hall and Bill De Arango. Webster is surrounded by some of the finest players of that time, just the way he liked it. Wonderful trumpeters such as Hot Lips Page, Buck Clayton, Emmett Berry, Idrees Sulieman and believe it or not, Maynard Ferguson. And ace rhythm players – aside from a good deal of his favourite drummer Catlett, J.C. Heard, Cozy Cole and Denzil Best are also here. State of the art bassists such as Hall, Oscar Pettiford, John Simmons, Israel Crosby. And most importantly to Ben, great pianists – aside from Wilson and both Johnsons, these sessions feature such stalwarts as Marlowe Morris, Johnny Guarneri, the prophetic and shortlived Clyde Hart, Jimmy Jones and the early bebop pianists, Al Haig and Argonne Thornton (later Sadik Hakim). As these names suggest, a lot of this music is classic, mature small group swing and some of the later sessions (especially from 1946) cross into early bebop territory. which didn't seem to faze Ben at all.

His playing here builds on his wonderful work with Ellington and, while mining the same emotional territory as he would alter, is quite different than his work in the '50s. Whereas Ben's sound during the Verve years was often velvety and at times ventured up quite high on

## Some lesser known Webster recordings

*From "the large gap of recording sessions" between 1947 and 1950 that Steve Wallace mentions, still a few lesser known recordings with Ben Webster exists. Back in his hometown Kansas City shortly after his second period with Ellington, November 1948 – July 1949 (expanding the Ellington sax section to six men) Webster on October 31 and November 1 1949 took part in blues recording sessions led by Bus Moten, three numbers, and singer Walter Brown, four numbers. They can be found on the 3-CD album "Kansas City Blues" on Capitol (CDP 7243 B 52042 2). Webster plays great, he feels being "home" will full control over his persuasive lyricism and, in most numbers, with his typical more brutal authority. Jay McShann plays first class blues piano on the Walter Brown sides.*

*Claes Englund*

the tenor into almost a falsetto range, his sound in the '40s was much heavier, thicker and darker, his vibrato tighter and he spent more time in the middle to lower registers. Despite the deeper, weightier sound, Ben was faster and more mobile on the horn in the '40s and tended to be more linear, playing longer, serpentine lines phrased very smoothly with a slurring legato. Ironically, though his sound lightened in the '50s, he generally played simpler and slower then. At any rate, hearing this missing Ben Webster convinced me more than ever that he is unique, one of the most eloquent, profound and imperishable soloists jazz has ever known.

## Influences

Conventional jazz wisdom holds that Coleman Hawkins and Lester Young formed the two great early models of tenor saxophone and that most players followed one or the other, with Webster definitely being counted among the Hawk followers. This was certainly true early in Ben's career. One story from the early 1930s has it that Ben was not only trying to sound just like Hawkins, but to dress, act, walk and talk like him too. One day a friend said, "Okay, I'm hearing and seeing Coleman Hawkins, but where is Ben Webster?" By the late '30s however, and continuing through his time with Ellington, Webster developed a style original and significant enough that it formed a third stream of tenor playing, between Hawkins and Young. His first great follower was Don Byas. I hear much more of Webster in Byas – in his sound, phrasing and vibrato – than I do Hawkins. Others followed; certainly Lucky Thompson, Lockjaw Davis, Flip Phillips, Benny Golson and especially Paul Gonsalves were Webster men. And Harold Ashby, who was a curator of Ben's style in much the same way that Paul Quinichette was of Lester Young's. And later, so-called "avant-garde" players like Archie Shepp, David Murray and Bennie Wallace are deeply indebted to Webster and have acknowledged this. So there is a strong line of influence coming from Webster that is quite distinct from Hawkins, it just took a while for people to catch up to him and recognize it. I think this is because Webster's playing, though very direct, is also quite abstract; this is the paradox of his style. He deals primarily with sound and emotion and these are both abstract things.

## Ben Interlude #2

*On a Friday night in May of 1964, veteran jazz fan Don Brown and his wife went to The Town Tavern to hear Ben Webster. They were seated at the bar directly in front of the bandstand, which was a raised affair up behind the bar at about the level of the bartender's shoulders. It was flanked by two of the biggest, noisiest cash registers in Toronto, often described as "the stereophonic cash registers". There was a good Friday night crowd on hand, but as usual, only a few people were paying any attention to the music. Ben was playing his heart out, ably backed by the local trio of Norm Amadio on piano, Bob Price on bass and Archie Alleyne on drums, and Don could sense his growing frustration. Ben had had a few and was teetering dangerously near the edge of the stage, and Don also noticed that, unlike other elite musicians such as Duke Ellington or Coleman Hawkins, Ben was not exactly a fashion plate. He was wearing a baggy, rumpled suit and, in contrast to the narrow, dark ties in vogue then, Ben was sporting one that had to have been eight or nine inches wide and could have served as some country's flag. Toward the end of his first set, Ben noticed that Don and his wife had been listening to him closely and he leaned precariously over the edge of the stand and asked if he could "play something pretty for the lady". Don froze. Here was one of his two favourite tenor players (the other being Lester Young) asking him to choose the final tune of the set and his mind went blank for a second and then he blurted out "Cottontail". Of course Ben had played it hundreds of times and he groaned, "Oh God, not now". Thinking fast, Don chose something more appropriate, suggesting "Willow Weep For Me". Ben's eyes lit up and he gave an appreciative nod, saying "You got it". He launched into a glorious interpretation of this beautiful old song and suddenly one could hear a pin drop in the club. Even the hookers and their pimps down at the end of the bar stopped their chatter and were hanging on his every note. It was one of those very special moments, an example of the kind of magic spell the thespian of the tenor could weave.*

*The set over, Ben went as quickly as his feet would carry him toward the club's entrance, where he'd spotted two longtime friends just coming in. They*

*were Mrs. Anger, the widow of the late Justice Anger of the Supreme Court of Ontario, and her son Ron, who was at the time the president of the Toronto chapter of the Duke Ellington Society. Mr. and Mrs. Anger had been longtime Ellington fans and first heard Ben in Hull, Quebec in 1940 when he appeared there with Ellington shortly after joining the orchestra. Ben was dead set on reaching the Angers and was really moving. Just then a young college student jumped up, pulled a pen and pad from his briefcase, and attempted to ask Ben for his autograph, like a paper coffee cup in the path of the charging Chicago Bears' defensive line. The massive Webster straight-armed the poor kid, knocking him flat on his back onto a small table, spilling its drinks and cigarette butts all over the couple sitting there. Big Ben never even broke stride and in a couple of seconds had managed to throw his huge arms around the petite Mrs. Anger. As Don puts it, talk about extremes – in an instant they'd seen Webster morph from being the tender balladeer of "Willow" to "The Brute" they'd read about, then just as quickly back into "Gentle Ben". Both the man and his music were full of contradictions.*

## Personality

Ben's Jekyll-and-Hyde emotional volatility was the stuff of legend and turned up both in his playing and in his behaviour. He could be very gentle and sensitive, as he was to his mother Mayme and great-aunt Agnes Johnson, both of whom he often lived with. They spoiled him with their cooking and other attentions, but he also doted on them. One story has it that when the two ladies were older, Ben used to brush their hair at night – 100 strokes each – before they retired to bed. He could become maudlin and sentimental when remembering departed friends – he was very close to both Jimmie Blanton and Sid Catlett, and their early deaths left a hole in his heart. He was known to weep openly when playing pretty ballads he loved, his eyes rolling back in his head, tears rolling down his cheeks. These tears were never far away. Many have told of Ben, remembering past times playing with great musicians, suddenly sobbing, saying, "Man, why don't I get to play with guys like that anymore?"

But out on the prowl, with a snootful



of booze in him, look out ... he turned into "The Brute", willing to take on all corners. Pimps, sailors, rounders, anyone who offered a slight or insult – real or imagined – Ben was all too willing to whale the tar out of them and had the physical prowess for this. If it didn't reach the point of mayhem, his hostility could still be obnoxious, belligerent, foul-mouthed, unmanageable. The only person who could handle Webster in this state was his old friend Benny Carter. Webster would listen to reason from Carter, whom he admired above everyone else, saying, "There's a man who can bake a cake as light as a feather and whip any man". (Carter was famous for his elegance, but was also a deadly street-fighter).



Along with the temper and gargantuan drinking, there was also ego and hauteur in Ben, though a lot of it was bluster. I think he felt the frustration of knowing that he was great, but undervalued. He saw himself as regal, expected the royal treatment and felt slighted when it didn't come. (There's a famous, funny story about this from Ben's later days in Europe. He was playing at a function attended by some European royalty and broke all protocol by butting into the official receiving line holding his saxophone, vigorously shaking some startled royal's hand, saying "Nice to meet ya Prince .... Ben Webster, King of the Tenors!") Milt Hinton spoke of a time in the mid '50s when Ben was living with him and his wife Mona and not working much. Hinton was doing a lot of studio work then and always tried to get Ben hired on record dates but to no avail, because Ben insisted on being paid triple-scale for doing sideman's work. So Ben's drink-

ing, ego and volatility made him his own worst enemy. There is a large gap of recording sessions by Ben in small groups between 1947 and 1950. Part of it was the second A.F. of M. recording strike of 1948 and that Webster rejoined Ellington's band for a while from 1948-49. But mostly between 1949 and 1950, his drinking was really out of control and he became ill, eventually moving back to his hometown of Kansas City to be nursed back to health by his mother and great-aunt. When he recovered, he began working with some obscure local bands in K.C. and later L.A., where he moved in 1951. Soon after that, Norman Granz came to the rescue and Ben made a huge comeback.

Certainly his temper was the reason Ellington fired him. The story I've read is that Ben had Ellington's permission to play piano with the band whenever Duke was busy off the bandstand schmoozing with management or customers, and Ben loved to do this. One night while drunk, he overstayed his welcome at the keyboard, playing very badly and embarrassing everyone. When Duke gave him hell and told him to get up, Ben was so enraged he went to Duke's dressing room and cut a couple of the maestro's expensive suits to ribbons with a knife. Duke gave him two week's notice, making Webster one of the few musicians Ellington ever actually fired. Webster had to have felt shame and regret over this, he loved Ellington and remained devoted to his music for the rest of his life. In some ways, his abrupt departure from the Ellington fold was a tragedy – it was a perfect setting for him and the band provided him with a kind of musical home and family, something he later lacked and craved. The brevity of his stay does serve to concentrate the brilliance of his work with the band though.

## Family

There is a growing conviction in some scholarly jazz circles that Ben Webster was in fact gay, closeted and possibly in denial for his whole life. I'm not certain how much of this is based on evidence or testimony and how much is speculation. Outside of his mother and great-aunt, Webster did not have many long-standing relationships with women. In his profile on Webster, the great Whitney Balliett mentions in passing that Webster was married very briefly in the 1940s,

## Said by Ben

*In 1934, Fletcher Henderson sent for me, and I went to New York. Along with Ellington and Chick Webb, Fletcher had just about the top band and the hardest music I've ever seen in my life! He had arrangements that were written in every key on the keyboard. I got a lot of help from Russell Procope. He would tell me to take my book home and the next day he would come around and help me with these arrangements. If you were fortunate enough to stay with Fletcher, I don't imagine you'd have too much trouble in any other band afterwards.*

*But the height of my ambition was to play with Duke. Barney Bigard took a vacation in 1935 and I had a chance to sit in the band for two or three weeks. And we went on the road for a little while. Then we made this record Truckin', and we did In A Jam. Then Barney came back, so I had to leave, naturally. But I sure hated to leave, because I'd enjoyed that music and hearing these guys play. That was such a great band. Duke has always been "way out front". He was then and he still is.*

## Ben Webster and Dexter Gordon

*These two giants spent quite some time together in Denmark. There is actually two streets named after them in Copenhagen "Ben Webster Vej" and "Dexter Gordon Vej". They also appeared on gigs together and the following story produces a few laughs:*

*When Ben Webster and Dexter Gordon were playing together, Dexter was taking a solo that seemed way too long to Ben. He asked a friend, "Are they showing Gone With The Wind around here? If so, I can go to see it and come back and Dexter will still be playing the same solo."*

## Ett möte med Ben Webster

DESS-medlemmen Johan Etzler skrev för några år sedan en liten berättelse om ett möte med Ben Webster som vi haft inlagd på vår hemsida. Alla kanske inte erinrar sig den och därför återger vi den här:

På 1960-talet råkade jag och Leppe Sundevall en eftermiddag på Gyllene Cirkeln bli presenterade för Ben Webster av Arne Domnérus. Ett intryck jag då fick av Ben var att ingen kunde ha bredare axlar än den mannen.

Något år senare var jag på resa med min lärare i det som kallades "modern prose" på Stockholms universitet. Vi mellanlandade hos Leif Anderson på Tessins Väg i Malmö. Vi bjöds på middag och under middagens gång imponerades jag av att Leif utan att ens behöva titta sig bakåt kunde hitta Louis Jordans "What's the use of getting sober when you gonna get drunk again" i sin skivhylla.

Resan fortsatte till Köpenhamn och vi hade fått tag på adressen till Ben Websters hotell. Vid besök där fann vi honom i sängen med hårnät (!) om huvudet och TVn påslagen men utan ljud och med sina egna inspelningar klingande från en bandspelare. Jag minns särskilt en underbar version av beatleslåten Yesterday med danska radions storband. Undrar om den finns utgiven?

Då och då gick Ben upp från sängen och pinkade i handfatet i rummet. Vi pratade naturligtvis mest om musik och Ellington. När vi talade om Lawrence Brown sa Ben; "I called him Sweetie, I named him!" Detta bara nämnt som ett komplement till "A Study in Brown" (Bulletin 3/2009). Kvällen tillbringade vi på Montmartre och lyssnade på Ben Webster, bl a med Rune Carlsson.

but I've never heard or read any other mention of this. Certainly Webster never had children or a 'normal' family life, apart from that with the two older ladies. It seems that Ben mostly needed women to look after him, rather than provide a romantic outlet. During his stay in Europe, this caregiving role was taken on in Amsterdam by his landlady, a Mrs. Hartlooper, and later in Copenhagen by an elderly nurse named Birgit Nordtorp.

My initial reaction to all this theorizing was one of shock and scepticism. Superficially, it seemed to fly in the face of Webster's image as a hard-living, brawling tough guy and I'm not overly fond of posthumous psychoanalysis. However, it's possible that Ben was gay, it stands to reason that there were many more gay jazz musicians back then than we know about. Lots of gay men have been married, and Ben's ultra-macho persona could have been a means of denial, overcompensation or even a cover to hide something he felt would never be accepted in the hyper-masculine world of jazz in those days. (Billy Strayhorn was the only openly gay man in jazz at the time, but he had the protection and sanctuary of being Ellington's indispensable right-hand man. Duke set Billy up with everything he needed and the men in the band loved Strayhorn like a brother.)

I have no idea if Ben was gay or not, nor do I care. After all, he's been dead for over forty years and his sexual orientation was his business, not ours. But if he was indeed gay, it might explain a lot of the mysteries of his tempestuous personality. The frustration, angst and isolation of being closeted all those years, coupled with the racism he regularly met as a black man in America, could well have led to the sudden towering rages, the loneliness and emotional extremes, the quickness to find offence, the desire to beat the shit out of somebody and make them pay for all of this ugliness and pain. Personally, I think Ben was disappointed and angry at a world that was seldom as pretty as the music he played or imagined. I don't think we'll ever know, but for whatever reasons, Ben was a complicated and conflicted character. This cost him dearly, but is also part of what makes his music so compelling.

### Ben Interlude #3

Between 1963 and '64, Rob McConnell lived in New York for a time, studying arranging and playing valve trombone in



Maynard Ferguson's band. One night he found himself in a musician's bar (probably Jim & Andy's) quite late and Ben Webster was there, out on a toot. Rob had heard Ben in Toronto and loved his playing, so he introduced himself and as soon as Ben heard he was from Toronto, he was all over Rob. "Toronto, you must know my man Bob Price – wow, that B.P. – what a motherfucker! Plays great bass, tells good jokes and he knows how to drink! Good dancer too!" (Apparently, Ben and Bob danced a couple of fox-trots together when in their cups at a party one night in Toronto after a gig, and Ben got a big kick out of it.) So Ben and Rob did some more drinking and talking and Ben became more and more nostalgic about the good times he'd had with Bob and decided he had to call him, right then and there. Rob didn't think this was such a good idea and said as much; it was now about three in the morning and Bob was then living with his elderly, widowed mother, who was a very nice, genteel lady in somewhat frail health.

Ben was not to be denied however, not in this state. "Don't give me all that bullshit about it being late, I got to talk to my man B.P.!" Ben found Bob's number in his book and bellowed over to the bartender, "Give me five dollars' worth of quarters to make the goddamn pay-phone go!" He hauled his massive head and shoulders into its narrow confines, with his haunches and spindly legs sticking out at a twenty-degree angle.



*He started bellowing out instructions to the long distance operator and deposited some quarters into the phone, which began ringing Bob's number in Toronto. This is what Rob heard from his end:*

*"Hello, s'that B.P.'s place? Whooz-zat? His mutha? ... Oh. I know itsh a little late lady, shorry I woke ya up, but thisisss important. I gotta talk to B.P.! Never mind what time it ish, put B.P. on – whaddya mean he's shleeping – well, wake him up, for Chrissakes! Tell him ish Frog on the line from New York! He'll wanna talk t' Frog!" As this was going on, Ben was starting to yawn and get sleepy, his tiny hat cocked back, shoulders leaning further and further in to the booth, his legs now sticking out at thirty-five-degree angle. He finally convinced Bob's mother to go and wake Bob up, the poor woman no doubt wondering just who this shrieking Frog character was and wishing her son had stuck to accountancy and never became a musician. As she went off to do Ben's bidding against her better judgement, Ben started sagging and drooping into the booth, his legs now on a full diagonal. By the time Bob Price came on the line, Ben was out cold, snoring like a bear, his face and hat mashed up against the glass of the booth. Rob went over behind Ben, and heard Bob's voice coming out of the receiver, "Hello. Hello Ben, are you there? Hello?" Very, very carefully, Rob reached around the sleeping giant and eased the receiver from his hand. "Hi Bob, it's Rob*

*McConnell. Sorry about that, it wasn't my idea. I just met Ben and he got to talking about you and Toronto and how much he misses you and he just had to call you and I couldn't talk him out of it. He's fast asleep now, right out." Bob chuckled, "No problem, but be careful when you wake him up. Maybe do a fox-trot with Ben and tell him it's from me, that'll cheer him up."*

## In Europe

Not long after Don Brown heard him at The Town Tavern, Ben took himself off to play a season at Ronnie Scott's club in London and stayed, eventually settling in Amsterdam, then moving to Copenhagen in 1969. His days in Europe were mixed. He enjoyed the more leisurely pace of life there and the relative lack of Jim Crow. And he worked quite steadily and found a fresh and enthusiastic audience, Europeans loved his classic playing and relished hearing him live for the first time. But it was also lonely, he missed his American musician friends and rejoiced in periodic visits from people like Jimmy Rowles and Phil Woods. He often found European rhythm sections to be amateurish, lagging behind instead of pushing him as he liked. This was better in Copenhagen though, as he found some good rhythm men there – Kenny Drew, N.H.Ö.P., Alex Riel and Tootie Heath.

He drank more and more and got bigger and bigger, resembling an inverted pyramid moving about on spinet legs. His health suffered and he needed a cane to walk. His playing became slower and slower and sometimes he was drunk to the point where it unraveled. But mostly

his playing remained intact, the beautiful sound, grace and his love of songs never left him. He made some good records in his last years, many of them on Black Lion with the players mentioned above. There's a hilarious recording from this period of Ben coaching the Danish Radio Big Band at a rehearsal, teaching, willing them to swing by all manner of profane, obscene and vocal urgings. Hearing it is the next best thing to having known him.

Ben died in Copenhagen on September 20, 1973, and is buried there. He decreed on his deathbed that his saxophone Betsy was not to be played after he died and it's now at the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers. Ben was just 64, but in terms of mileage he lived many more years than that.

*(DESS has got the kind permission of the author to reprint this article which was originally published on the author's blog site [www.wallacebass.com](http://www.wallacebass.com). A bio of Steve Wallace was presented in Bulletin 3/2014.*

*More about Ben Webster in our Bulletin: A lengthy article by Stan Brager – The Beauty in the Brute – can be found in Bulletin 2/2012.)*



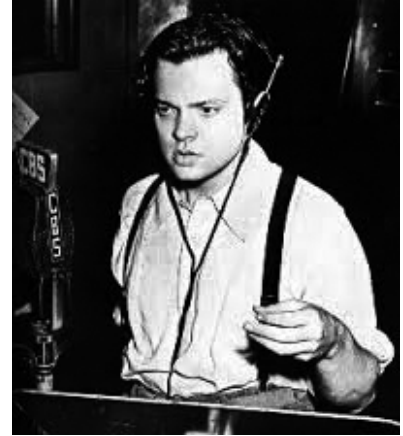
# It's All True

Unfinished Orson Welles Film: Duke Ellington Hired To Write Music

By Fred Glueckstein

*Orson Welles (May 6, 1915 – October 10, 1985)*

*was an American actor, director, writer, and producer who worked in theatre, radio, and film. Welles is best remembered for his innovative work in theatre, most notably Caesar (1937), a Broadway adaptation of William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar; in radio, in the 1938 broadcast The War of the Worlds, one of the most famous in the history of radio, and in film for Citizen Kane, which is ranked as one of the all-time greatest films.*



In 1941, Orson Welles conceived *It's All True* as an omnibus film that mixed documentary and docufiction. It was to have been his third film for RKO, following *Citizen Kane* (1941) and *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942). The original conception of *It's All True* was to be in four parts: *The Story of Jazz*, *My Friend Bonito*, *The Captain's Chair*, and *Love Story*.

That year, in Los Angeles, shortly after the premiere of *Citizen Kane*, Welles sent Duke Ellington a message backstage of *Jump for Joy*. The message asked Duke to meet Welles at RKO the following morning at nine. Ellington was on time. He later said "I never been anywhere else on time in my life". However, Welles was an hour late.

Before Ellington could get a word in, Welles jumped into his impressions of *Jump for Joy*. "From the first curtain to the last curtain. Blow by blow, every number, every sketch, all of it coming out of his mind without notes - and he saw it once! It was both a review and a mass of suggestions," remembered Ellington. "It was the most impressive display of mental power I've ever experience - just pure genius."

In fact, Welles was a tremendous Ellington admirer, who would see *Jump for Joy*, Ellington's full-length musical based on themes of African-American identity that debuted on July 10, 1941, on several occasions.

During their first meeting, Welles asked Ellington to do *The Story of Jazz*, which was drawn from Louis Armstrong's 1936 autobiography, *Swing that Music*. Armstrong was to star in the film. "I want it to be written by Duke Ellington and

Orson Welles, music written by Duke Ellington," he said. "While you're thinking about this, you're on salary at a thousand dollars a week," he told Ellington, "and if you don't take it, you're a sucker!" "I accept," said Ellington.

In Ellington's autobiography, *Music is My Mistress*, he wrote that the project was going well. Duke had assistants, and a lot of research was conducted. Then the unexpected happened. Ellington explained that Welles had a big dispute with

*Duke, Orson and Cab*



RKO concerning another picture he was doing in South America, and the company cancelled all of his projects, including *It's All True*.

Ellington wrote: "He [Welles] left them with a lot of film on their hands, which I understand they couldn't put together without him. That was the end of *It's All True*. No filming was done - just a lot of research. I collected up to \$12,500, for which I wrote a total of twenty-eight bars, and it was supposed to represent Buddy Bolden," wrote Ellington. "I tried to recapture some of it in *A Drum Is a Woman* (1957), but I am not sure of the relationship between them, because a lot of time elapsed between *Jump for Joy* and *A Drum Is a Woman*."

In 1945, long after RKO terminated *It's All True*, Welles again tried to make the jazz history film without success. He spoke about it with Armstrong, who responded with a six-page autobiographical sketch.

John Edward Hasse in *Beyond Category: The Life and Genius of Duke Ellington* wrote of *It's All True*: "As Hollywood had yet to portray jazz authentically in a feature film, Welles's original idea had created high expectations: the disappointment in the jazz community was widespread."

Ellington later wrote that he unexpectedly met Welles on a train to Chicago in 1956. It was just after *A Drum Is a Woman* was released. "I told him about it, and said he should see it. "Then he told me about his play" wrote Ellington". The play was titled *Le Temps Court*, a reworking of *Faust* in a program under the title *The Blessed and the Damned*, and was scheduled to premiere in Paris.

When Ellington gracefully declined taking on the task to write the score, he suggested Billy Strayhorn. This was acceptable to Welles, who first met Strayhorn on the West Coast in the 1940s. At the time, there was speculation of an Ellington-Strayhorn-Welles collaboration, which did not occur. With Strayhorn now to write the score for *Le Temps Court*, he travelled to Paris to do the score on-site.

One of the pieces was devoted to the play's female protagonist Helen of Troy. It was titled "*Helen's Theme*". After the production of *Le Temps Court* was cancelled before the premiere, Strayhorn later adapted "*Helen's Theme*" for his band and renamed it *Orson*, a work that is too little known.

Although *Orson*, is credited to Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn, Walter van de Leur, who has made very extensive studies about Strayhorn and published a book of his finding, *Something to Live For-The Music of Billy Strayhorn* published by Oxford University Press (2002), established that Strayhorn wrote *Orson*. *Ellingtonia: The Recorded Music of Duke Ellington and His Sideman*. Compiled by W. E. Timmer, Fourth Edition shows *Orson* was recorded by Duke Ellington & His Famous Orchestra on April 7, 1953 in Los Angeles at Capitol Studios. It was first issued on Capitol T-637 "*Dance To the Duke*". Ellington Orchestra's *Orson* was a strangely abridged version, and it didn't do justice to Strayhorn's intentions, which he crafted as 'an intricate orchestral setting around one of his most inspired and emotionally charged themes'.

Also recorded with *Orson* was *My Old Flame; I Can't Give You Anything But Love; Ain't Nothin' Nothin', Baby, Without You; Stormy Weather; Star Dust, and Three Little Words*. These numbers appeared on Capitol H-440 "*Premiered by Ellington*".

On December 3, 1955, *Orson* was again recorded live by the Ellington Orchestra from a NBC broadcast from *Zardi's*, but it has never been released. Finally, *Orson*, in its original full length version, was recorded in the late 1990s by the Dutch Jazz Orchestra under the direction of Jerry van Rooijen. It was released on Challenge Records CHR 70091.

John Edward Hasse in *Beyond Category: The Life and Genius of Duke Ellington* wrote: "Incidentally, Welles reportedly said that, other than himself, Ellington was the only genius he had ever known." Duke Ellington and Orson Welles were brilliant in their respective fields, and both men left their personal imprint on the twentieth century. Each will be remembered for their individual contributions in jazz and cinema.



## The 24th International Duke Ellington Study Group Conference



Organisatörerna Michael Dinwiddie och Mercedes Ellington.

Kompletterande information om konferensen sippas så sakteliga in från arrangören Duke Ellington Center For The Arts (DECFA). Ursprungligen annonserades konferensen att äga rum 19-23 maj. Nu har man koncentrerat den till 19-22 maj. Innehållsmässigt tycks detta inte innebära några förändringar men många delegater har säkert bokat sina resor och hotell baserat på den första informationen.

DECFA har skickat ut en "Tentative Conference Schedule" varur vi kan notera följande: Under de fyra dagarna kommer presentationer i olika ämnen att framföras av Philippe Baudoin, Matthias Heyman, David Hajdu, Krin Grabbard, Daryl Waters, Steven Lasker, Bill Saxonis, Phil Schaap, Mick Carlon, Ken Steiner, Olle Edström, Gregory Marion, David Palmquist, Marcello Piras, Will Friedwald, Frits Schjött och Carl Woideck.

S.k. "paneler" kommer att behandla olika Ellingtonämnena och i dessa kommer namn som Rebecca Fulop, Carmen de Lavallade, Julie Malnig, John Wriggle, Michele Corcella, Nate Sloan, Herb Boyd, Mercedes Ellington, Eli Yamin att ingå. Man annonserar desutom "Surprise Guest Performers".

Delegaterna kommer även att bjudas på musikalisk underhållning bestående av The Duke Ellington Center Big Band, Bobby Sababria's Multiverse Big Band och en trio under ledning av Antoinette Montague.

Värt att notera är att man kommer att visa filmversionen av "*A Drum Is a Woman*".

Mera detaljerad information om konferensen kan inhämtas på <http://decfa.org>

Vi har all anledning att tro att konferensen kommer att bli lyckad.

DESS

# Satin Doll

One of Duke Ellington's most frequently played numbers

*Bill Kirchner is a composer-arranger, saxophonist, bandleader, educator, record and radio producer and jazz historian.*

*In an interview by Ethan Iverson he has the following to say about Satin Doll:*

**BK:** On the Ed Sullivan Show I heard the Ellington band playing *Satin Doll*. What anybody think of the tune *Satin Doll* it's been mauled by bad lub date or lounge bands. To hear that tune played by the Ellington band with that saxophone section and those voicings is an unforgettable experience.

**EI:** The original Capitol recording of *Satin Doll* is unbelievable. Currently in our repertoire it has become this bland AABA thing that just cycles forever. But when you listen to the first recording, that's not what it is. It's got moving parts and it's very specific. The counterpoint in the orchestra is complicated, and also in some kind of way a bass feature.

**BK:** They eventually had a bass solo as well. On the At the Bal Masque version a few years later with Jimmy Woode, it became like a bass feature. That was an Ellington and Strayhorn tune, apparently as we now know, Duke wrote the melody and Billy Strayhorn wrote the harmonies, which are very II/V-ish in a way that Duke's wasn't. Anything in Ellington's music that smells of II/V-ism, you can be pretty sure is Strayhorn.

**EI:** Ah, I see

**BK:** The estates have been arguing ever since. As with many of Ellington's tunes, it was composed as an instrumental and later on lyrics were added. In this case maybe the worst lyrics that Johnny Mercer ever wrote.

**EI:** They're not particularly good, are they?

**BK:** They're terrible! And especially for Johnny Mercer, by his standards. They're Johnny Mercer on a very bad day. But we are stuck with them.

**EI:** Tell me about seeing the Ellington band at 12 years of age.

**KB:** It was at the Pittsburgh Jazz Festival. Several bands played. And Duke's band played *Satin Doll*, and Billy Strayhorn was introduced by Duke. From that night on, my fate was sealed.



## Satin Doll on Capitol

After Duke Ellington had left Columbia and signed up with Capitol Records his first recording date for the new company was on April 6, 1953, and the very first composition recorded was *Satin Doll*. Back in 1995 Mosaic Records issued a CD-box entitled *The Complete Capitol Recordings of Duke Ellington*. The very informative inlet was written by Stanley Dance and here we quote what he has to say about *Satin Doll*:

"*Satin Doll* was recorded first – and for the first time – at this first session for Capitol. It was far from an instant hit, yet Ellington had much faith in the number and worked hard in later years to secure its mass acceptance. Not only did his band play it every night, but eventually he would play it as a piano solo whenever he was interviewed on radio or television. The orchestral treatment varied subsequently (Ray Nance's eight bars, as here, were long an integral part) until it became more of a bass feature. The somewhat unusual coloration of the reed section derived from the fact that it was led by Paul Gonsalves. The tempo here is noticeably slower than that favored later."

When studying New DESOR one finds that *Satin Doll* is listed no more than 536 times. Ellington kept the number on his repertoire for the rest of his career. These 536 occasions are mostly live recordings which have been saved but far from all of them have been released. Needless to say *Satin Doll* was performed on numerous other occasions which have not been saved on tape.

## Who was the "Satin Doll"?

The musicologist Walter van de Leur has made a thorough research on the life and works of Billy Strayhorn in his book *Something to Live For – The Music of Billy Strayhorn* (Oxford University Press 2002) but funny enough he has nothing to say about *Satin Doll* in this otherwise very informative book. However, in the recently published *Strayhorn – An Illustrated Life*

edited by Alyce Claerbaut and David Schlesinger (Agate Publishing 2015) van de Leur has the following to say:

"It is strange how some of a composer's most famous pieces can be anomalies in his or her oeuvre. Neither Ellington nor Strayhorn hardly ever wrote straightforward Tin Pan Alley-type tunes, such as *Satin Doll*. In fact, they hardly ever cowrote single works to begin with. In the case of *Satin Doll*, however, Strayhorn reportedly fleshed out a Ellington riff, added chords and lyrics, and dedicated the piece to his mother, whom he lovingly called satin doll. Ellington maintained that it was his father's nickname for Evie Ellis, the unofficial Mrs. Ellington. Other women since have claimed that Duke told them that they were the song's secret dedicatee.

The tune became a modest hit in 1953 as an instrumental piece, but its success grew after Johnny Mercer added the hip lyrics. Strayhorn's original lyrics are lost but Mercer's version may partly retain them. The Ellington sketch and the original Strayhorn reworking haven't surfaced either. There is, however, a little allusion to *Satin Doll* in Strayhorn's *Kissing Bug*, composed roughly ten years earlier. The true extent of all these various contributions remains clouded, enough so that some parties took the case to court, where a judge ruled that the credits should remain as they were."

In David Hajdu's biography of Billy Strayhorn: *Lush Life* (Farrar Straus Giroux 1996) one can read the following:

"Most constructively, Strayhorn fleshed out an Ellington riff sketch with harmony and lyrics – an ode to Strayhorn's mother, spun around Strayhorn's pet name for her – and ended up with *Satin Doll*. Though Johnny Mercer was brought in to replace Strayhorn's oedipal lyrics with ones evoking more commercial male-female love, *Satin Doll* was recorded as an instrumental and became a modest hit (and the last single-record success of Ellington's career), peaking at number 27 in three weeks on the Billboard chart. (Strayhorn's original lyrics to *Satin Doll* are not known to have survived.)

# Vi kvinnor

av Kid

Den följande artikeln var införd i Aftonbladet den 21 oktober 1933. Författaren bakom signaturen är Kid Severin, legendarisk kåsör i framför allt Expressen. Men hon började sin karriär på Aftonbladet, som gett oss tillstånd att återge hennes artikel. Efter Duke Ellingtons besök i Europa 1933 blev han synnerligen uppmärksammad på denna sida av Atlanten vilket troligen föranledde dessa, på den tiden kanske relativt vanliga synpunkter på en musikform som började göra sig allt mer gällande. Den som gjorde oss uppmärksam på artikeln var DESS-medlemmen Alf Arvidsson, etnolog och musikforskare vid Umeå universitet, som bl a gett ut boken "Jazzens väg i svenskt musikliv".

Mitt på dagen promenerade jag på Birger Jarlsgatan och tänkte på livet, döden och ett rött sidenband på min nya laméklänning. Då fick jag se en skylt där det stod Harmoni. Just vad en stackars höstdeprimerad människa kan behöva, sade jag till mig själv och gick in i affären bakom skylten. Men där fanns endast disharmonier, ty affären är en grammofonaffär och luften darrade av hot-musikens nervösa, sönderslitna rytm.

## Svart jazzkung

Eftersom den lilla affären bl a är specialiserad på exklusiv och hypermodern dansmusik och älskad av staden jazzungdom och jazzmusikanter bad jag att få höra på det allra senaste.

Naturligtvis var det Duke Ellington. Denna kolsvarta herre, som plötsligt erövrat världen med sin hot music med sitt iskallt medvetna, koketta och djävulska utnyttjande av ljud. Hans negerorkester har en rytm och en barnlig glädje att föra oväsen som kommer det att rycka i de mest förstockade knäveck. När Duke Ellington var i London togs han emot med ovationer som en Garbo och en musikkritiker skrev om honom: "Hans musik är inte en orgie, det är ett vetenskapligt applicerande av en noga utmätt och farlig stimulan."



Ellingtonbandet  
anländer till  
Waterloo Station,  
London, 1933

## Blues och jazzläppar

De nya plattor mänskligheten har fått att stimulera sig med är ganska många. Duke tycks vara lika produktiv som han är svart.

Jazzlips heter en snabb foxtrot. Här ligger man särskilt märke till orkesterns berömda klarinett, eller den här gången rättare sagt två klarinetter. De visslar fräckt som gatpojkar. När trumpeteten skäller som bäst kommer plötsligt ett mjukt pianosolo.

På baksidan är *Harlemania*, också en snabb foxtrot. Den har en snabb, lättflytande, elektrisk rytm. Ibland stannar tonen, utdragen som ett tuggummi.

*Sloppy Joe* är bluesbetonad. En trött herre stönar långt och rytmiskt. Klarinetten drillar ovanligt gällt och fräckt mot



en mörk bakgrund av dovt dunkande.

I *Rocky Mountain Blues* har man lämnat de fräcka effekterna. Den är lugn och klar som luften över bergen. En svag, ljus trumpet, ett lätt pianissimo.

En annan bra blues är *Bundle of Blues*. En foxtrot med en lätt, flytande rytm är *Hyde Park*. Den har något av den vårdade galoppen hos fina hästar på promenadritt.

# Nya CD-skivor

Glädjande nog har vi i flera av de senaste Bulletinerna kunnat anmäla nyutgivna skivor med Duke Ellington, och denna gång kan vi presentera ytterligare två nyheter för våra läsare. Den första har getts ut av Storyville och är betitlad

## DUKE ELLINGTON & His Orchestra – Rotterdam 1969



Under Europaturnén 1969 uppträdde orkestern i en mångfald länder i Europa, bl. a. i Sverige och som i detta fall De Doelen, Rotterdam, där två konserter genomfördes den 7:e november. Här rör det sig om den sena konserten, som är nästan fullständig. Repertoaren är den för turnén gängse, och innehåller inga speciella överraskningar, men det skall sägas att ljudkvaliteten är ypperlig och att medföljande skivfolder är intressant och välskriven och författad av vår danske DESS-medlem Bjarne Busk. Ett nummer som bör nämnas är "Black Butterfly" som tagits till heder igen efter många års frånvaro och framförs på ett förtjänstfullt sätt. Skivan finns nu ute i näthandeln och bör inte vara svår att få tag på.

### Låtlistan är som följer:

Take The A Train (theme) & C Jam Blues/Kinda Dukish & Rockin' In Rhythm/Take The A Train/Up Jump/La Plus Belle Africaine/Come Off The Veldt/El Gato/Black Butterfly/Things Ain't What They Used To Be/Don't Get Around Much Anymore/Medley#1 (Mood Indigo-Sophisticated Lady)/Medley#2 (Making That Scene-It Don't Mean A

Thing-Be Cool And Groovy For Me)/Satin Doll/R.T.M./In Triplicate into Satin Doll



## Elvin chez Duke - European Tour – January 1966

Maison du Duke MDD-007

är titeln på en ny CD som givits ut av vår franska systerförening och endast kaninhandlas av föreningens medlemmar. Det som är unikt med denna skiva är att Elvin Jones spelar med i stället för Louie Bellson som inte följde med på turnén. Dessutom finns ytterligare en trumslagare med, Skeets Marsh. De två spelar att döma av den fina ljudupptagningen samtidigt, men en del överraskande markeringar och effekter, liksom extra tyngd och drive torde kunna tillskrivas Jones. Inspelningen är gjord vid en konsert i Salle Pleyel i Paris den 29 januari 1966, och innehåller musik från både den första och andra konserten denna afton, samt en inspelning av *Ad Lib On Nippon* gjord kvällen innan i Frankfurt.

### Skivan har följande innehåll:

Take The A Train/Medley (Black & Tan Fantasy-Creole Love Call-The Mooche)/Chelsea Bridge/El Viti/La Plus Belle Africaine/Trombonio-Bustoso-Issimo (Trombone Buster)/Passion Flower/Things Ain't What They Used To Be/Wings And Things/Take The A Train/Ad Lib On Nippon

Anders Asplund

## Duke Ellington's European tour 1948

In the Bulletin 4/2015 on page 13 was an article about recordings made by the Ellington group during the tour. It was said that the conference CD issued 1997 contained a recording of *Take The "A" Train* made in July 1948. However, Roger Boyes has made us aware of the fact that research has proved that the recording actually emanates from a telecast from Liverpool on October 17, 1958. Duke is joined by Malcolm Mitchell g., and Russ Stableford b. We stand corrected.

## Jazz Humour

Dad:

Your mother says she'll leave  
me if I don't quit buying  
Duke Ellington records.

Son:

That's tough, dad.

Dad:

Yes, we shall miss her.

## Nya medlemmar

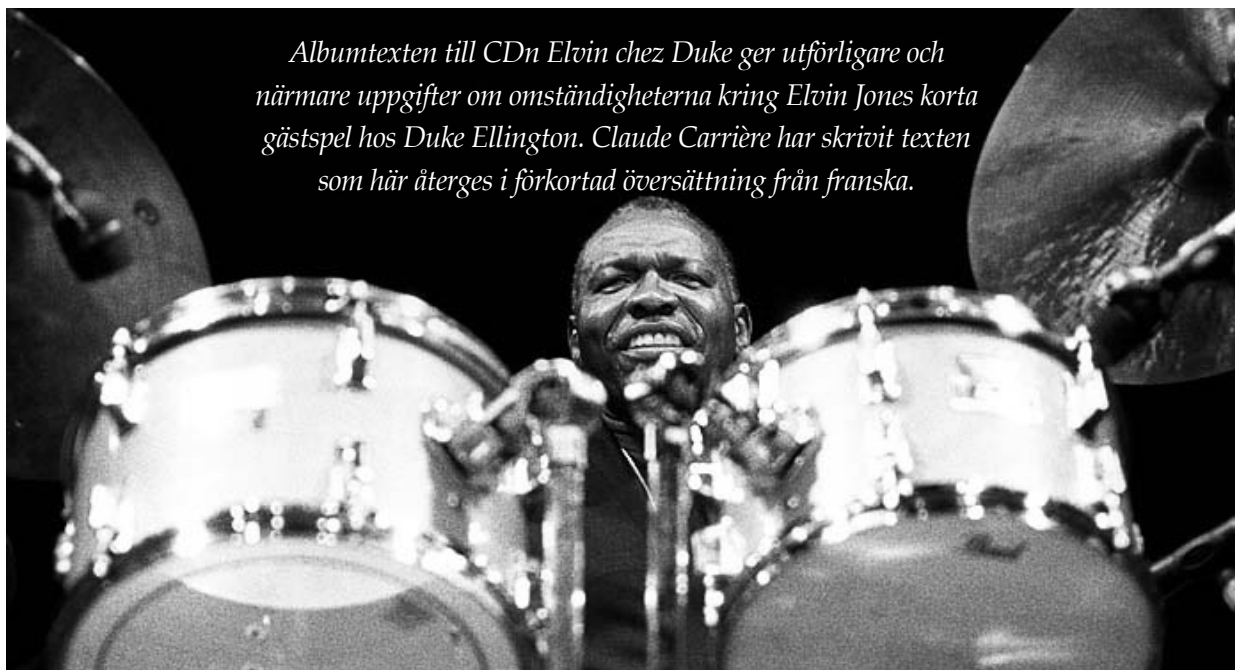
DESS hälsar följande  
nya medlemmar välkomna i vår  
illustra förening

Jan Leonard, Djursholm  
Torgil Rosenberg, Täby

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



# Elvin chez Duke



*Albumtexten till CD:n Elvin chez Duke ger utförligare och närmare uppgifter om omständigheterna kring Elvin Jones korta gästspel hos Duke Ellington. Claude Carrière har skrivit texten som här återges i förkortad översättning från franska.*

I november 1965 bestämde sig John Coltrane för att börja spela med dubbla trumslagare. Rashied Ali engagerades för att komplettera Elvin Jones. De problem som uppstod ledde snabbt till slutet för Coltranes historiska kvartett. Ali och Jones fungerade dåligt tillsammans, både personligen och musikaliskt. Dessutom var Jones och pianisten McCoy Tyner båda emot att avlägsna sig från den regelbundna rytm som båda kände för. De var (som bl a Coltrane-biografen Lewis Porter riktigt påpekat) inga free form-musiker. Tyner slutade först, i november -65. Ali ersattes av Frank Butler, men för Jones kvarstod problemen; i januari -66 accepterade han ett erbjudande från Ellington. Efter ett framträdande i San Francisco tog han planet till Frankfurt för att ansluta till DE som turnerade i Europa sedan tre dagar.

Louie Bellson hade varit Dukes trummis från slutet av juli -65 som ersättare för en utarbetad Woodyard. Inför Euro-putarnén lämnade han bandet för att spela med hustrun, sångerskan Pearl Bailey och ersattes av "den värderade trumslagaren" Skeets Marsh från Philadelphia. (1974 åter i Europa med Count Basies orkester). Efter konserterna i Lissabon och Barcelona 24-25/1 var Ellington föga tillfreds med Marshs spel och tillkallade Elvin Jones; inte för att ersätta Marsh utan för att assistera! Samt, utan tvivel, och i hemlighet, för att roa sig med att

ruska om "gamlingarna" i orkestern (och det är sant, det finns vittnesmål om hur Duke, Gonsalves och ytterligare några få gladdes medan vissa andra inte var så roade). Problemet för Jones var emellertid att han åter befann sig som hos Coltrane, som en av två trumslagare.

Elvin anslöt till orkestern i Frankfurt 28/1. Efter konserten där framträdde de i Paris 29/1 (två konserter i Salle Pleyel), dagen därpå i Milano (dessa tre dagar svarade Ella Fitzgerald med trio och blåsarna i Dukes orkester för konsertens andra del). Situationen löstes upp 31/1. Efter nästa konsert i Geneve återvände Jones till New York, medan Duke kallade in Sam Woodyard som vilade ut hos familjen i Boston och nu anslöt sig till truppen i Basel 2/2.\* Hela sällskapet återkom till Salle Pleyel den 11/2 mycket nöjda med att alla störningar under denna episod nu hade lett till ordning igen med den oersättlige Sam Woodyard på plats med sina magiska trumstockar! (Albumtexten berättar därefter lite om de olika numren på skivan, vilket inte refereras här.)

*\*Anm: Tveksam uppgift, troligen Zurich, där man spelade 2/2, i Basel dagen därpå. Därefter gick turnén vidare bl a till Sverige.*

Intressant att notera i detta sammanhang: Ellington torde ha haft aktuell information om Elvin Jones och hans kapacitet; Jones medverkade nämligen en kort tid

före de fyra dagarna i Europa hos Duke, 10-11/1 på inspelningen av Earl Hines förnämliga album *Once Upon a Time* (prod Bob Thiele, Impulse A-9108) där också flera av Dukes dåvarande musiker utgjorde stommen i bandet: Johnny Hodges, Lawrence Brown, Russell Procope, Jimmy Hamilton, Paul Gonsalves, Buster Cooper, Cat Anderson; dessutom tidigare och senare bandmedlemmar: Ray Nance, Clark Terry, Harold Ashby, Bill Berry, Aaron Bell och Sonny Greer – som alternerade med Elvin). Elvin karakteriserades vid tillfället som "a hell off a drummer" av Procope, även om han lite senare rimligen hörde till de äldre som vädrade visst missnöje enligt Carrières albumtext. Hines-skivan är en höjdare, som när den kom lite sensationellt visade hur förnämligt Elvin kunde spela mer traditionellt svängigt, tungt och drivande än man visste. Han skulle passa hos Duke!, minns jag att jag tänkte då, och tycker fortfarande även om Woodyards tyvärr korta och upphackade återkomst fram till -68 naturligtvis var det allra bästa. Redan tidigare hade Duke faktiskt också spelat med Elvin Jones, i slutet av 1962 på den skiva Duke och Coltrane gjorde tillsammans och där Jones alternerade med Woodyard.

*Claes Englund*



# Azalea

*Azalea är en krukväxt som i Sverige är oftast förekommande på fönsterbräden. Den förekommer dock också i buskform i trädgårdar och i varmare klimat växer den vilt. Den är släkt med Rhododendron och är synnerligen giftig. I äldre kinesisk poesi kallas den för "Thinking of home bush". Staden Sao Paulo i Brasilien har den som sin stadssymbol. I flera amerikanska sydstater har man årliga azalea-festivaler. Men vad har detta med Duke Ellington att göra?*

Förbindelsen med Duke Ellington är det faktum att han 1946 eller 1947 komponerade en melodi som han gav namnet *Azalea*. Den spelades inte ofta och i New DESOR finns den endast registrerad vid tre tillfällen. Det första är från den 10 juni 1947 då Duke Ellington gjorde en serie inspelningar för Capitol Radio Transcriptions. Vid tillfället ersattes Ellington av Billy Strayhorn vid pianot. Numret är en feature för barytonsångaren Chester Crumpler som framför Ellingtons egen text med ett kortare avbrott för ett trumpetsolo troligen av Harold Baker. Skivproducenten Wally Heider köpte rättigheten att ge ut dessa Capitolsinspelningar på sitt LP-märke Hindsight men han valde att välja bort *Azalea*. Hans förklaring var att han inte uppskattade Crumplers sätt att framföra numret och han ansåg dessutom att melodin var en undermålig komposition av Ellington och inte värd att ingå i samlingen. Det är självklart Heiders högst personlig uppfattning men en samlare tycker naturligtvis att i en samlingsutgåva bör allt material ingå. Smak är något som bör överlätas på lyssnaren.

Bland samlare cirkulerar en inspelning som inte är registrerad i New DESOR. Det är en liveinspelning från Ciro's i Los Angeles den 7 augusti 1947. Den skiljer sig inte mycket från den föregående inspelningen.

*Azalea* är mycket vacker som melodi betraktat men många har uttryckt sitt missnöje över texten. Ellington var en avsevärt bättre kompositör än textförfattare. Han hade säkert väntat sig något bättre av kompositionen men i brist på uppskattning tycks den ha tagits ur repertoaren. Men den 11 december 1951 tas melodin till nåder igen vid en gram-

mofoninspelning för Columbia. Arrangemanget är till vissa delar nytt och man kan höra kortare inpass av Jimmy Hamilton. Sångare är nu Lloyd Oldham, som endast medverkade i bandet en kort tid. När man hör hans insats kan man lätt förstå varför han inte fick fort-



satt engagemang. CBS gav naturligtvis inte ut denna inspelning men franska CBS hade fått en kopia och gav 1983 ut inspelningen i sin serie "The Complete Duke Ellington 1947-1952" (CBS 66607). Dessförinnan hade den även getts ut på Up-To-Date 2004.

Denna misslyckade inspelning torde ha lett till att Ellington nu definitivt tog bort numret ur sin repertoar och kanske föll det i glömska. Men 1961 händer något som gör att kompositionen *Azalea* är värd att uppmärksamma. Då gjorde skivbolaget Roulette en inspelning med Louis Armstrong och Duke Ellington tillsammans. Det var Armstrongs orkester plus Ellington som genomgående spelade in Ellingtonkompositioner. Den första LPn med titeln "L. Armstrong and D. Ellington together for the first time" (R-52074) innehöll inte *Azalea*. Det var först 1964 när man gav ut "The Great Reunion" (R-52103) som man fick möjlighet

att höra Armstrong framföra *Azalea*. 1990 kom Roulette ut med CD-boxen "The Complete Louis Armstrong & Duke Ellington Sessions" (CDP-7938442) med alla nummer plus andratagningar.

Vid Ellingtonkonferensen i Stockholm 2004 var George Avakian inbjuden som föredragshållaren och han hade som ämne valt "Louis Armstrong, Guest Artist with the Duke Ellington Orchestra" med underrubriken "The recording that never came about". När Avakian var inspelningschef på Columbia hade han som ambition att få till stånd en inspelning med Armstrong och Ellington tillsammans. Av olika anledningar kunde detta inte genomföras.

Senare i sin karriär fick Avakian i uppdrag att sätta samman en 3-CD-box med olika Armstronginspelningar i kronologisk ordning. En medarbetare föreslog då *Azalea* men Avakians kommentar var "Oh, nobody ever heard of it before, and the melody is hard to follow and Duke's lyrics are not exactly professional". Men efter ingående diskussioner och studium visade det sig att med stor sannolikhet hade Ellington komponerat melodin 1946 med Louis Armstrong i tankarna. I Armstrongs biografi "Swing That Music" (sid. 19-22) beskriver Louis hur han i unga år råkar somna in bland azaleor. Avakian beskriver det "Duke's lyrics parallel a very poetic description by Louis about falling asleep in an azalea swamp during a Boys Home picnic."

Avakian berättar vidare; "*Azalea* is a very difficult song. Dan Morgenstern, who was at the session, told me how Louis did it in two takes. The first take was pretty good, and you can hear it because it was finally released. On the second take Pops nailed it!"

Eddie Lambert har följande att säga om Roulettainspelningarna i sin "Listener's Guide": "The repertoire is mainly taken from Ellington's output as a songwriter, with *C Jam Blues* masquerading as *Duke's Place* and *Azalea*, a little known ballad from the forties, the only surprise. This last item has just about the poorest lyrics - written by Ellington himself - of any Ducal song. They are the epitome of that overblown, overcolored manner which characterized Ellington's verbal expression at its worst. Fortunately they

are quite overshadowed by Armstrong's majestic statement of the theme."

I inlägget i Roulettes CD-box skriver Dan Morgenstern: "Duke mustered up the courage to pull out a lead sheet for *Azalea*. He pulled up a chair, sat down facing Louis, and held up the words and music. Louis donned his horn-rimmed glasses, smiled that matchless smile, and began to hum and sing. An expert sight-reader, he soon had the melody down. The lyric, even with Duke having moved to the piano, was a bit challenging, but it, too, fell into place. As all this was taking shape, Ellington was positively beaming, and when a take had been made, he was ecstatic. If indeed he'd had Louis in mind when he created this hothouse conceit, he had chosen properly, for no one else could have made it credible but the incredible Mr. Strong."

Efter alla synpunkter på sångtexten till *Azalea* torde det vara lämpligast att här återge den:

*It was such a fine spring day  
down Louisiana way  
With fragrance, divine  
and such magnificent regalia,  
Azalea*

*Oh what a lovely sight  
in red and pink and white  
Can't help, but believe  
that nothin' evil can assail ya  
So naive, Azalea*

*You were at ease, on the knees  
of the moss covered trees  
whose tops meant to make  
a high ceiling  
in the church-like clump  
of a cypress swamp  
I've yet to get that same  
strange feeling*

*I've got to go back there  
and find that blossom fair  
I always dream of  
Because with you  
who could be a failure  
My first love, Azalea*

Det är inte många andra artister som spelat in *Azalea*. I diskografierna hittat man ungefär ett dussin, bl.a. med Sonny Rollins, Butch Miles och Randy Sandke.

George Avakians kåseri kan läsas i dess helhet i Bulletin 3 och 4/2008.

*Bo Haufman*

# Recension av Dess CD 3

*Hösten 2015 gav DESS ut sin tredje CD till medlemmarna. Den innehöll Duke Ellingtons första konsert i Stockholms Konserthus den 6 februari 1963. Ett exemplar av skivan skickades till den amerikanska föreningen The International Association of Jazz Record Collectors (IAJRC). Föreningen publicerar kvartalsvis en mycket läsvärd tidning, The IAJRC Journal, och i december-numret 2015 kunde man läsa en recension av vår CD författad av Bob Reny. Valda delar återges här:*

The Duke Ellington Society of Sweden released another winner – this time live recordings of the orchestra from 1963 when Duke was visiting Sweden. I find the CD fascinating because it captures a complete concert – just as presented – with Duke introducing the titles and making witty comments about each soloist. There were two concerts in the Concert Hall on that date and this recording captures the first one in its entirety.

A quick check with Tom Lord's Jazz Discography shows no new material, most of it was recorded at one time or another, but these versions have the added zip of a live performance and little nuances that make them a little different from the studio takes.

Just poking around, you've got Jimmy Hamilton playing *Silk Lace* against a very busy background, Cat Anderson's pyrotechnics on *Eighth Veil*, Lawrence Brown and Harry Carney working *Pyramid* with Latin undertones and Carney blowing the cobwebs away.

Duke and his men play the *Asphalt Jungle Theme* in a shuffle cadence (he wrote the music for the TV show in 1961) but the outcome pales compared to the other cuts. Ray Nance on violin

turns in a superlative performance on *Guitar Amour*, with a cha cha cha, from the soundtrack of *Paris Blues*. On *Cop Out & Cop Out Extension*, everyone in the band, except the rhythm section, steps back and lets Paul Gonsalves just play and play – joy oh joy. Up tempo *Jam With Sam* has Carney back to lead the group, but he's soon joined by Buster Cooper, Procope and trumpeters Burrowes and Anderson, with Anderson shrieking at the end. *Stompy Jones* is smooth and relaxed and the two Cootie numbers just ooze his muted horn, one over a measured tempo and one over a shuffle. The lushness of Johnny Hodges fills *Star Crossed Lovers* and *Dancers In Love* is all Ellington, an encore, that is delightfully light and frothy. There are two very familiar chestnuts – *Things Ain't ...* and *Do Nothing ...*, the last the only vocal in the concert and sung by Milt Grayson, a baritone with a Eckstine kind of voice.

This is the second DESS disc we've reviewed and, like the first, it's only distributed to members of the Duke Ellington Society of Sweden. But you can join the Society and then receive this CD and all that follow. The Society also issues an impressive quarterly glossy magazine on Ellington that has enough articles in English to make it worth your membership fee, the last issues featured articles on Clark Terry and Freddy Jenkins. If interested, please contact Bo Haufman, e-mail: bo.haufman@telia.com for details on how to join. If you love Ellington, talk to Bo.

Vi, och inte minst vice ordföranden, känner oss hedrade av de uppskattande orden. DESS har nu en ny CD planerad för distribution i höst och vi är övertygade om att även den kommer att bli en "winner".

DESS

# Posttidning B

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

## KALLELSE!

Duke Ellington Society of Sweden  
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### PLATS:

Franska Skolans Aula,  
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Portkod för kvällen: 0905  
Entrén öppen fr. kl. 17.00.  
Entréavgift: 100:- i kontanter  
Närmaste T-banestation: Hötorget  
Glöm ej portkoden som  
endast gäller för denna kväll.  
Kommer Du inte in så ring:  
070-622 88 16, 070-540 70 09.

### PROGRAM:

**17.30 - 18.30**

Thomas Erikson – DESS-medlem  
med ett gediget kunnande om  
Duke Ellington och hans musik  
kåserar på temat Joe "Tricky Sam"  
Nanton.

**18.30 – 19.00**

Paus med möjlighet till mingel  
och inköp av öl/vin och wraps,  
30:-/st.  
Obs! Endast kontanter gäller.

**19.00 – 20.15**

För kvällens musikaliska inslag  
svara en trio under ledning av Bos-  
se Tigrén på klarinetten assisterad av  
Joel Svensson gitarr och Eirik Lund  
bas. Repertoaren kommer att bestå  
av mainstream jazz och självklart  
med inslag av Duke Ellington.  
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