

BLUE LIGHT

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Antony Pepper, contact details as above.

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If you have only joined recently, please note that your calendar year subscription for 2016 entitles you to all four issues of *Blue Light* which are dated 2016, including the ones published earlier in the year, before you joined.

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Opposite: Pages from the programme for Ellington's appearance at Salle Pleyel, 1933. Reproduced by kind permission of Steven Lasker

BUREAU DE CONCERTS
 MARCEL DE VALMALÈTE
 45, RUE LA BOÉTIE, PARIS

JACK HYLTON
 présente
 par entente avec IRVING MILLS
 "Harlem's Aristocrat of Jazz"

DUKE
 ELLINGTON
 FAMEUX ORCHESTRE
 "Créateur d'une nouvelle forme de la Musique de Danse"

avec
 IVIE ANDERSON
 Bouquet de Blues
 BAILEY AND DERBY
 Rhapsodie pour claquettes
 BESSIE DUDLEY
 L'Originale danseuse aux hanches de serpent

PROGRAMME
 (CHOISI PARMi LES ŒUVRES SUIVANTES)

1. It's Glory	Ellington
2. Blue Ramble	Ellington
3. Rockin' In Rhythm	Ellington
4. Rosa Room	Hickman, arranged Ellington
5. Lightnin'	Ellington
6. Creole Rhapsody	Ellington
7. Old Man Blues	Ellington
8. Double Check Stomp	Ellington
9. Echoes of the Jungle	Ellington
10. Lazy Rhapsody (Swanee Lullaby)	Ellington
11. Swing Low	Ellington
12. Ducky Wucky	Ellington
13. The Sheik	Snyder, arranged Ellington
14. The Duke Steps Out	Ellington
15. The Mooche	Ellington
16. Blue Tune	Ellington
17. Merry-Go-Round	Ellington
18. Strocce	Spike Hughes
19. Twelfth Street Rag	Bowman, arranged Ellington
20. Every Tub	Ellington
21. Awful Sad	Ellington
22. Slippery Horn	Ellington
23. Baby, When You Ain't Here	Ellington
24. Ring Dem Bells	Ellington
25. Blackbird Medley	M'Hugh-Fields, arranged Ellington
26. Sophisticated lady	Ellington
27. It Don't Mean a Thing	Ellington
28. Black and Tan Fantasy	Ellington
29. Hot and Bothered and High Life	Ellington
30. Mood Indigo	Mills Ellington
31. Birmingham Breakdown	Ellington
32. Flaming Youth	Ellington
33. Jazz Lips	Ellington
34. The Mystery Song	Ellington
35. Dreaming Sweet Dreams of You	Ellington
36. Stevedore Stomp	Ellington
37. Doing the Voom Voom	Ellington
38. I'm So In Love With You	Ellington
39. St-Louis Blues	W. C. Handy, arranged Ellington
40. Black Beauty	Ellington
41. Bugle Call Rag	Schoebel, arranged Ellington
42. Old Man River	Kern, arranged Ellington
43. Jive Stomp	Ellington
44. Drop Me Off In Harlem	Ellington
45. Paradise	Brown, arranged Benny Carter Ellington
46. Creole Love Call	Ellington
47. The Monkey	Ellington
48. Tiger Rag	La Rocca, arranged Ellington

CANTATRICE: Miss IVIE ANDERSON
 DANSEUSE ET DANSEURS: Miss BESSIE DUDLEY and BAILEY and DERBY
 - - - PIANO GAVEAU - - -



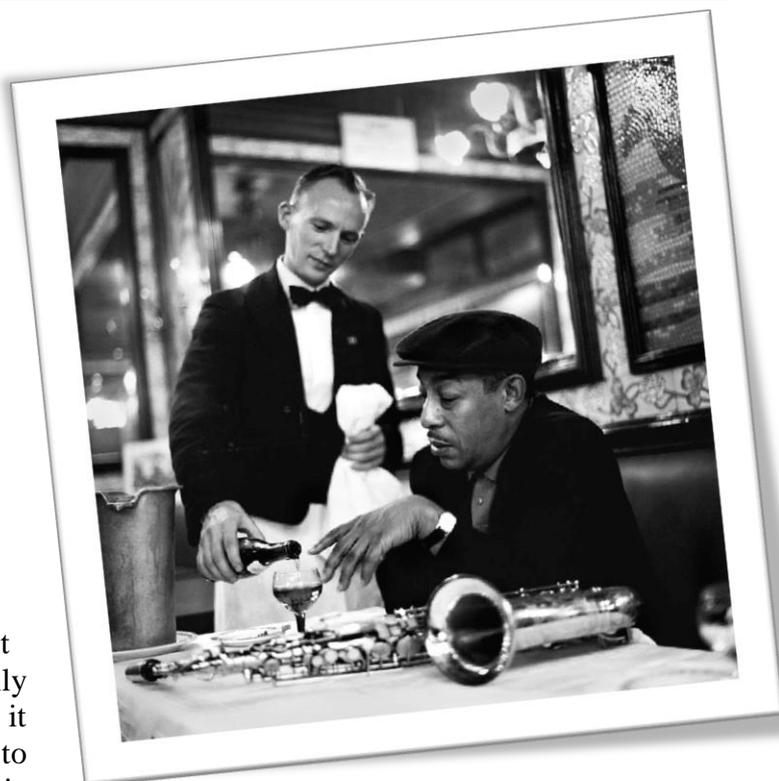
Like the edition dedicated last autumn to the centenary of Billy Strayhorn's birth, this issue of *Blue Light* is a 32 page special with a Parisian theme.

Professor Krin Gabbard kindly gave permission for us to republish his essay on *Paris Blues, Ellington: Armstrong and Saying It with Music* for that Strayhorn edition. In the event, there was not space to publish it at that time. We present the essay now, in celebration of Billy Strayhorn's hundred and first birthday and we have collected several other pieces with a French theme for this extended edition. Ernest Borneman's *Diary – 68 Hours Without Sleep*, which gives an account of Ellington's visit to the city of light in 1948 was originally published 68 years ago now. We do not believe it has been republished since so we are proud to present it here accompanied with photographic material kindly supplied by Klaus Götting.

Our Parisian collection is prefaced by Geoff Smith's account of the 24th International Duke Ellington Study Group held recently in another great cultural capital of the world, New York. There will be more about the conference and the return of *On Record* with a bumper crop of new CDs in our December issue.

The problem of keeping our members informed of news and events, inspired Wendy Lawrence, a Founder member of DESUK, to write to our *Forum* page and ask "Would it not be possible to email DESUK members when you are notified of... events, rather than us having to wait months in some cases before learning of them?"

Unsolicited mail shots to a large number of people can sometimes cause issues with security and privacy. In response to Wendy's request, however, DESUK has now put a tentative toe into



the whirlpool that is social networking by opening a Twitter account. The address is at the top of this page. It is not necessary to be a member of Twitter to access our rolling news and events information. The DESUK page is on public display. Should you be a member of Twitter or join, however, it would be possible to 'follow' our account and contact us directly through that means. We hope it will provide a useful service for our members, relaying news and events more immediately than the three-month turnaround of *Blue Light* can effect. Let us know what you think of the service.

Ian Bradley

KINDA DUKISH BIG BAND directed by **MIKE FLETCHER**
Quarry Sports & Social Club, Quarry Lane, Northfield,
Birmingham B31 2PY
MONDAY 3 OCTOBER 2016

For details contact: mike@e.fletcher.fsworld.co.uk

Forum

Dear Editor

I was sorry to read in *Blue Light* that Buster Cooper died on 13th May. Would it not be possible to email DESUK members when you are notified of such events, rather than us having to wait months in some cases before learning of them? Many of us will not have subscribed to DukeLYM where, no doubt, it was reported almost immediately.

Having seen and heard Buster play at various DE conferences in the 1990s I was delighted when he had his photo taken with me at the one held in Leeds. In the hope that you will consider printing members' photographs in *Blue Light* from time to time I attach two taken at the Leeds Conference in 1997.

I continue to enjoy reading *Blue Light* but do miss seeing the blue cover which was always a welcome sight when opening the envelope. The white version just does not have the same impact resembling, as it does, a business brochure (car manufacturers and banks come to mind).

Kind regards,

Wendy Lawrence

Founder Member No.16a



Dear Editor

I've just been re-reading *Blue Light* (Vol. 23, No. 1, Spring 2016), having, I'm sorry to say, only skimmed through it when it first came.

I'm so pleased you were able to use some of the material I sent and combine it with Vic Bellerby's review to such great effect.

However I thought I should mention that Michael Hardcastle's interview on page 11 is almost certainly from the *Liverpool Echo* of 18 February 1966 as the article itself refers to "Liverpool last night", that being

Duke's concert at the Mountford Hall, Liverpool University.

The reference to the *Daily Express* of 22 February 1966 in my email of 18 September last, referred to the Coventry Cathedral concert photo and review which I think you didn't need in view of the other material you had available.

Best wishes

Peter Bevan

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

PROMPTED by Membership Secretary and Vice-chairman Mike Coates, several of our members have been reminded recently that they have still to pay their 2016 membership dues. So far this operation has involved a reminder letter signed off by me, postage of same, plus some logistical brow furrowing by Treasurer Grant, *Blue Light* Editor Ian, printer Steve and distributor Roger.

The immediate difficulty has been in deciding upon an appropriate number of *BLs* to print should, heaven forefend, some non-paying members have decided not to renew and thus no longer receive the journal. They have already received the first two 2016 issues but we have to draw a line somewhere of course.

What they are missing this time is another "bonus" 32 pages issue, up from the usual 24, another welcome initiative courtesy of Ian Bradley.

We did in fact print extra copies of the summer issue to coincide with the impending concerts by our Oregon, US member Matt Cooper. His latest article, *Piano Reflections*, was featured, plus a back page display giving the recital details, and we hoped to sell them to audiences as part of a concert programme package. Unfortunately the trip was cancelled owing to the illness of Matt's wife Sharon. Our new committee member Frank Griffith stepped in at Foyle's playing in duo with pianist Keith Nichols.

This reminds me to give a special welcome to Frank, who is adding his experience and ideas to our committee as eminent musician, educationalist, and ace ideas man and wheeler-dealer. He is on frankgriffith@brunel.ac.uk

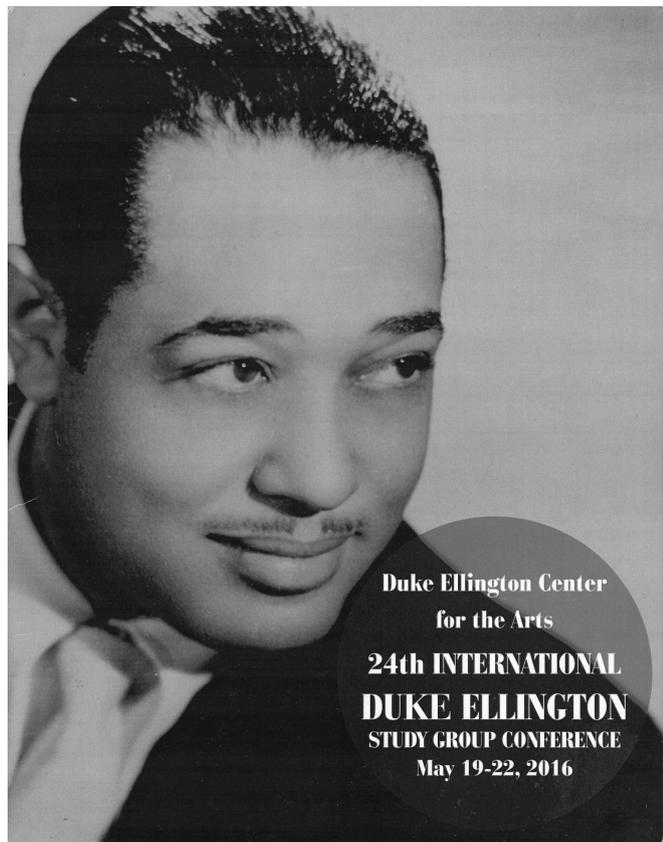
Enjoy your expanded issue. I can also assure our steadfast and loyal members there are more special delights to come very shortly. To quote Duke, don't you dare go away.

Geoff Smith

COLOSSAL, STUPENDOUS... (Not really, but it *was* NEW YORK)

Geoff Smith's chronological overview of the 24th International

Duke Ellington Study Group Conference, 19-22 May 2016



TO THE heading above I could add *all-singing, all-dancing, cast of thousands...* again, not really; it just felt like it. In truth, there was not that much straight-ahead Ellington live orchestral content, yet the conference was laser-focussed on the city where he picked up his mail. There was, is, and will be, no better place to commemorate and celebrate Ellington. And we surely did...

First and last venue was St Peter's Church, Lexington Ave, the city's jazz church. Outside on the Thursday, a Jazz On The Plaza session provided an informal prologue where early-bird delegates gathered and munched sandwiches in the sunshine surrounded by iconic skyscrapers old and new welcoming us to Manhattan Midtown. Music was by the Susan Warner High School, Staten Island, Jazz Band, and yes, that really was Billy Strayhorn's piano being played by student Shannon Cahill.

A short stroll took us to the Paley Center For Media and a showing of the CBS US Steel Hour's telecast of *A Drum Is A Woman* performed live in the studio in 1957. Seeing it on a big screen, in reasonably well-defined black-and-white with fair sound, was a personal ambition fulfilled. If anything, I found the

musical impact was lessened by the staging; I concluded that I now prefer just the aural experience of the preceding Columbia record, a "ground breaking milestone in 'concept media', a calculated reaffirmation of the maestro's elder-statesman (*really, in 1956?* – my parenthesis) status, and a triumphant tone-parallel of African American history to join Ellington's pantheon of programmatic works", to quote part of John Wriggle's conference programme note.

Panellists and the Paley Center staff reinforced that the precious telecast still cannot be shown outside of the building, or made available commercially. They also made us feel we were honoured VIPs and the same went for hosts at all other venues. NYC certainly does happy these days, with New Yorkers as friendly and helpful as Londoners, and that's saying something.

The screening was followed by a panel discussion and delegates' first chance to meet Carmen de Lavallade, legend of the dance and TV's Madame Zajj herself. Plus another legend, 95-year-old Candido Camero, king of the bongos, the musical embodiment of Carribee Joe, and the creator of the first musical sound to be heard in the telecast. The conference was indeed shaping up well.

John Wriggle had important matters to raise about *Drum* but we are likely to have to wait for publication of another book anthology for his definitive take. He suggested the piece is seen as an uncomfortable relic but with many of its awkward factors nevertheless establishing it in the jazz canon as one of Ellington's most important projects.

Back at St Peter's it was show time. All enjoyed fine eats at the opening reception, co-hosted by the local Duke Ellington Society Inc. and conference promoters the Duke Ellington Center For The Arts. Frank Owens directed the DECFA Big Band, with DESUK honorary member trombonist Art Baron taking the solo honours with *The Single Petal Of A Rose*, his tribute to Joe Temperley. We had ballroom dancing from Mercedes Ellington and Michael Choi, tap from AC Lincoln and songs with Antoinette Montague, Lincoln and Ty Stephens. It was great to meet George Avakian among the luminaries.

The Friday sessions up in Harlem at a newish arts centre, MIST Harlem, were suitably serious with 12 presentations scheduled to be spread over nine hours including the lunch break. A 35 minutes late start meant there was a need for catch-up throughout and many delegates failed to last the distance. I was one and missed John Hasse on Washington's Duke

Ellington (or vice-versa, presumably) with many historic photos and maps shown as a backdrop for Duke's first 24 years. Far too good to be on so late in the day.

In order, after a double-bass quartet prelude, keynote speaker Robin Bell-Stevens, daughter of Aaron Bell, asked: Where are the women in jazz? The question was developed with a session on Ellington's musical tributes to women, and a Jazz and Gender panel.

As usual with panel discussions there was plenty of food for thought with maybe less by way of conclusion. Rebecca Fulop, presenting on Intersections of Jazz and Gender in the film *Anatomy Of A Murder* got down to specifics, arguing it is demeaning that *Flirtibird* is linked to Lee Remick's character – Laura being much more than that - and disappointingly typical that yet again wailing jazz saxophone is deployed to depict sleaze. As I found with the *Drum* telecast, it was generally agreed that the album has more significance than Otto Preminger's 1959 film. Fulop voiced the view of many by saying she would dearly like to know more about what Duke and Billy wanted in *Anatomy* compared with what was used by Preminger.

A real find came from Philippe Baudoin, vice-president of La Maison du Duke in Paris. He was a friend of the late pianist Aaron Bridgers, himself an intimate friend of Billy Strayhorn. Bridgers gave Baudoin the first draft of his memoirs which, together with a foreword by Ellington, remain unpublished. As well as extracts from both, Baudoin showed items from two of Bridgers' scrapbooks he had found in a Parisian flea market and a moving letter Aaron had received from Billy from his hospital bed in July 1965.

More exciting insights came from David Alan Bunn presenting on orchestrator Luther Henderson's "wonderful jazz/symphonic collaboration" with Ellington. Bunn, Henderson's protégé over 30 years, took us through Duke's 1932 original *It Don't Mean A Thing...* to show what Henderson made of it symphonically – *That Do-Wah Thing*, as recorded by Simon Rattle/City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (EMI Classics). Bunn identified eight progressions in the Ellington recording (featuring Nanton, Bigard, Ivie Anderson) and 20 in the Henderson (solos by Clark Terry, Joshua Redman, Joe Lovano, Regina Carter, Geri Allen). It seemed to me that everyone present loved hearing both, which is just as it should be, Henderson's contribution to Ellingtonia being often downgraded.

Krin Gabbard, author of a Charles Mingus critical biography due to be published this year, argued that Mingus's music is second only to Duke's in its beauty and complexity. He investigated the various accounts of what happened when Mingus walked out of the

Money Jungle recording sessions including one in which Mingus asked Ellington to scrap the trio recording with Max Roach and do the session again just as a duo with the bassist. Intriguingly, Duke apparently introduced himself to Roach and Mingus at the start of the session with: "Think of me as the poor man's Bud Powell." As Gabbard put it: "That didn't last long."

Now nearing the end of a six-year project on Jimmie Blanton, Matthias Heyman took us through the contributions of the great "deep boom" Ellington bassists pushing the boundaries of bass-paying, from Wellman Braud (*East St Louis Toodle-oo*) to Joe Benjamin on *Blues For New Orleans*. He included what he believed to be the only film footage of Blanton actually performing, a slice of a silent home movie courtesy of Steven Lasker.

"Give your Ellington collection another listen concentrating on his sophisticated writing for the string-bass," Heyman urged. In his actual writing for Blanton and others, Duke left nothing to chance.

Sound chronicler Bill Saxon spoke on Ellington's influence on such composers as Gershwin, Stravinsky and Copeland, as extending far beyond jazz. Others cited as being under the spell included Charles Lloyd, Willie Nelson, BB King, Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Lenny Kravitz, Izzy Pop, Joe Jackson, Johnny Mathis, and Judy Collins. It is always good to be reminded of this.

The 2013 Broadway review *After Midnight*, with the Jazz At Lincoln Center Orchestra as the pit band, was reprised by musician and writer Nate Sloan, who asked how best it is now to represent Ellington's Cotton Club tenure and how he coped with the venue's more reprobate aspects.

Finally for the Friday presentations marathon, John Hasse elaborated on Duke's boyhood and first third of his life in Washington DC, with the young man bristling at categories and where his character, ambitions and musical orientation, were shaped by family, community, and city.

Next morning, back at St Peter's, we faced an agonising choice – take in the presentations or head out by coach to Woodlawn Cemetery, Duke's final resting place. I opted for the latter, so missed Marcello Piras on Ellington's Freemasonry and its relevance to an understanding of the *Liberian Suite*, and Gregory Marion on the suites, specifically *Nutcracker*, *Peer Gynt* and *Such Sweet Thunder* where, to quote the programme, "the integrity of Ellington's artistry is never compromised, even when – or perhaps better, because – the nexus of all activity contains an edgy underside".

The conference's biggest panel aggregation kicked off the Saturday afternoon session. Eight music, dance, and theatre professionals, spoke on performing

Ellington on stage, with Mercedes Ellington to the fore on her great Broadway show *Sophisticated Ladies*, which ran for two years, eight shows a week.

Loren Schoenberg, moderator for an Ellington On The Road session, reminded the audience we were in appropriate surrounds, the jazz church where he had witnessed such as Russell Procope, Sonny Greer, Francis Williams, Clark Terry and Alice Babs, giving inspiring performances, “perhaps all the more important because of the state the world is in”.

Ellington in Sweden was surveyed by Olle Edstrom with fascinating - to this old Fleet Street hack - quotes from Stockholm papers covering Duke concerts in 1933, through 1939, 1948, onwards, to church appearances in the Alice Babs period. Now there is a decline in importance but Duke has not vanished. “On a daily basis Ellington’s music is still serenading in Sweden.”

Carl Woideck, always reliable for producing fascinating angles on the world of Duke, dissected the 1931 and 1933 advertising (press) manuals of his manager Irving Mills, the first package concerned with positioning Ellington as an aristocratic dignified musician yet purveying the primitive and hottest music in the world straight out of the jungle. Two years later all that was gone, the larger promotional manual proclaiming an extraordinary composer of stylistic individuality. Thumbnails of his superb musicians always mentioned their education and college background and there was no more talk of primitivism. Woideck reminded us that this manual was still being widely utilised in advertising and newsrooms well into the 1940s, i.e. far beyond the Mills period. Credit to Mills for that, I would add.

Steven Lasker’s rabbit out of the hat in his Earliest Ellington presentation was what he proudly proclaimed to be the first example of Ellington’s name on a record label. Following on, the master researcher also revealed what he cited as the first use of the name on a piece of published sheet music, while playing for us his important recent transfers of 78s, including seven from November 1924 to early 1925.

A one-hour dinner break preceded a three-hour evening session devoted to film and TV discoveries. *Wall Street Journal* music critic and Sinatra biographer Will Friedwald introduced new Ellington and Ella Fitzgerald footage including Duke playing *Lush Life* less than six months after Strayhorn’s death, plus lots of US TV material by popular singers of the 1960s, up to the Ellington orchestra performing a Beatles medley on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Ken Steiner brought the audience back to earliest Duke with an updated presentation of his discovery of Duke and The Washingtonians 1925 film debut on the silent *Headlines* (see many previous issues of *Blue Light* back to Ellington 2012), and announcing that the

complete restored feature-length film is likely to be released shortly. Steiner also advised that the actual filming occurred “six blocks to the west of here”.

Sunday morning back in MIST Harlem was a bit like Sunday morning in any town if you like, as I do, partaking of a sumptuous brunch in a buzzing café while gazing out at the busy street scene. Danny Mixon, a fine pianist, gave up a flamboyant indeed startling *Single Petal Of A Rose* as a prelude to classical singer Candice Hoyes’ moving rendition of the inevitable *Come Sunday*.

The stage was set for Carmen de Lavallade to receive the Duke Ellington Center For The Arts Beyond Category award but the actual plaque was not there. Conference organisers Mercedes Ellington and Michael Dinwiddie were unfazed and our own DESUK *A Drum Is A Woman* CD was deployed as a stand-in gift. In graciously accepting it, Miss de Lavallade diplomatically said nothing about having already purchased her own copy from our Secretary Quentin Bryar. Yet awarding her the CD was absolutely appropriate. Miss de Lavallade told how hers and Duke’s paths crossed many times and how she had met him in the dance studios when her late husband had wanted to choreograph *The Liberian Suite*. But performing *A Drum Is A Woman* had been the highlight of her career, she said emphatically, even though a glance at her amazing dance, theatre, film and TV credits suggests this cannot be so.



Carmen de Lavallade with Drum CD

The itinerary then took delegates back on the tourist trail around perhaps New York's greatest present-day music complex. Duke Ellington would certainly have approved of and embraced Jazz At Lincoln Center, which opened in 2004. By decree, the Time-Warner shopping complex by Columbus Circle had to include an area for performing arts. The magnificent Rose Theater, Appel Room with views behind the stage across Central Park, and Dizzy's night club, was the result.

After a VIP tour by Doug Hosney our awestruck party was ushered into a lecture room for the conference's bill-topping final presentation, a polished performance by jazz historian, producer, and educator Phil Shaap. He held delegates in thrall with his unravelling of the "miracle" pairings of Duke with Louis, Basie, Hawkins, and Coltrane. "I have always been grateful to those who have made these events occur," he said, referring to five organisations involved in bringing about "the superstar sessions we dream about and then happened".

And that could be said of the conference itself I thought as I walked around part of Central Park

perimeter back to St Peter's for Jazz Vespers and the programme's muted and reflective ending.

New York succeeded in terms of the old show-business adage of leaving you wanting more. Every session, every performance, did that, constrained as the organisers often were by time and place, let alone cash. I was disappointed I could not experience it all – and that applies to NYC itself – but hopefully our great journal *Blue Light* may fill in some of the gaps in due course.

I am now wondering where and what may follow this 24th conference. The number of full-paying delegates was nowhere near enough to make the conference financially stand-alone viable, and there was a huge list of sponsors in the programme. Nothing new in that, and we are grateful, but I feel another chapter in these conferences may now have reached its end. The conferences ran annually from 1983-2000, often with on-going \$500 floats being forwarded on from one committee to the next. The next three were at four-year intervals up to Woking, England, in 2012, set up out from nothing by just two of us. With pride I can say that this spawned Amsterdam 2014; Portland OR 2015, and NYC 2016 followed. Here's to the next time, of course. Hopefully someone somewhere will emanate the slogan on many a New York t-shirt: Just Do It.



Jan-Olov Isaksson, Bo Haufman, Mrs Gover, John Gover, Antony Pepper, Ricky Riccardi, Ken Steiner, Debbie Smith, Geoff Smith at The Louis Armstrong House Museum, Corona, Queens, NYC

À la folie: Duke Ellington and Paris by Ian Bradley



Duke Ellington's *affaire de coeur* with Paris lasted forty years. The sentiment was reciprocated entirely. To the French critic Jacques-Henri L  vesque, Ellington's music revealed "the very secret of the cosmos" and the surrealist poet Blaise Cendrars concluded, "Such music is not only a new art form but a new reason for living."

These *bon mots* from Cendrars echoed, whether consciously or not, the words of the standard written as a yearning teenager by Ellington's arranging and composing companion Billy Strayhorn, *Something to Live For*. And more famously still, of course, 'the bite of it' could only be eased in *Lush Life* by "a week in Paris." The lyric proved prophetic for Strayhorn's love affair with the City of Light was possibly even more profound than Ellington's.

Clearly the two men found themselves entirely at ease with the capital's congenial cry of *libert  ,   galit  , fraternit  *, as did a large number of black musicians who gravitated towards the continent of Europe after the war, many of whom took up residence permanently. Whilst this introductory essay can

provide only necessarily the most superficial survey of Ellington and Strayhorn's work in Paris¹, it should be noted that several members of Ellington's orchestra itself were drawn to working extensively in Paris. The very first truly independent small group session where a member of Ellington's band was not just the titular but the actual leader of the session was that organized by Rex Stewart, and featuring Django Reinhardt, whilst the Ellington aggregation was in Paris in 1939; Johnny Hodges's first venture into leadership took place in the city during the band's residence in 1950; Paul Gonslaves, Clark Terry and Cat Anderson all led recording sessions or made albums in Paris and for Anderson, as well as numerous other Ellingtonians such as Sam Woodyard, Norris Turney and Booty Wood, the city provided a home and opportunities for

¹ A much more detailed survey, from which this present article draws much useful research is that written by John Edward Hasse, "A New Reason for Living": *Duke Ellington in France* in the anthology *Eurojazzland: Jazz and European Sources, Dynamics and Contexts*, Edited by Franz Kerschbaumer, Laurent Cugny and Luca Cerchiari (Northeastern University Press, 2012). The entire text of Hasse's essay may be read online at: <http://villesville.blogspot.co.uk/2016/07/eurojazzland.html>

further recordings in the years after Ellington's death and what was, to all intents and purposes, the end of the Duke Ellington Orchestra.

Perhaps even more importantly to Ellington than social acceptance was the artistic respect accorded to his music. Certainly, he returned to the USA from the continent with his faith in the merits of his own art restored and reinvigorated by the significance ascribed to his music by European critics. Crucially, it was on the concert stage, rather than the floor of the club or dance hall where his music was received. Audiences sat and listened.

Such reverence, however, was perhaps something of a two-edged sword. In the audience for the orchestra's very first concert in Paris at the Salle Pleyel on 27 July 1933, was the French critic Hugues Panassié. In 1946, he wrote an account of the several concerts he had attended during the Orchestra's first stay in Paris. Translated by Stanley Dance, the piece appeared in Mark Tucker's *The Duke Ellington Reader*. Of his first impressions of Ellington 'live', Panassié wrote:

"Duke began with the excellent *It's a Glory* and the first bars of it will always echo in my ears. The sound of the band, as was to be expected, was much richer than on records. But the solos of the less powerful instruments – I mean the saxophones and clarinet relative to the brass – were more or less overshadowed by the accompaniments of counter-melodies. Thus I had much difficulty in hearing most of Johnny Hodges's solos during the concert. In this regard, it is obvious that on records the microphone can overcome such disadvantages. In the same way, the saxophone section, as heard at the Salle Pleyel, seemed rather feeble in comparison with the brass section, while on records, the saxophones are placed near enough to the mike to adjust the balance."

Such forensic examination of the merits of the Orchestra's music and its presentation were to be a thread running through Ellington's critical reception in Paris over the years. Panassié's response to the hitherto unsuspected difference between the arrangements on record and the arrangements played in concert was initially delight:

"What struck me strongly was the discovery that the arrangements themselves sometimes differed from those used on the records. I understood that some had been done over, improved, enriched over the years by new ideas that came to Duke and his men. For others, I realized with astonishment at the second concert, several quite different arrangements existed which Duke used alternatively – sometimes one, sometimes another. Thus the *Mood Indigo* of the first concert scarcely resembled that of the second, where the melody was stated *pianissimo* by an extraordinary brass sextet."

When Ellington returned to Paris in 1950, his audience were not delighted but horrified that not only the arrangements but the music itself had moved on. Reports in *Der Spiegel* that the audience nearly booed the band off stage may have been overstating it, but nevertheless the performance resulted in Ellington receiving a letter from M. Jules Bourkon, Directeur Général of Parisiennes Arts et Spectacles. The letter, written 13 April 1950, is worth quoting in full:

Dear Mr. Ellington,

I am very sorry that I must write this letter to you but I have to do it because of yesterday's performance and I think you yourself are aware that the success was not such as we expected it to be.

Unfortunately, the programme did not make appeal to the public although from the artistic point of view it was very satisfactory.

The real error was caused by the lights –the audience could not see much of what was being passed on the scene and although I insisted on putting more light

Mr Celley refused to follow my and the Chief Electrician's advice and kept to his own idea.

This experience is going to cost me too much. On the other hand it was a psychological mistake not to cut short Kay Davis' song when the public showed its dissatisfaction.

We should never allow ourselves to go against the public's wishes as it is the thing of greatest importance.

The audience was dissatisfied as well because the programme was too short.

Because of this unfortunate evening of yesterday which started in this way our tour in Paris I cannot foresee what consequences it may have for the future.

Therefore, we must see what we can do about it all and what decisions to make to our best understanding and mutual profit.

In consequence I would like you to change a little the programme and the end of the first and the second part and add two *morceaux* of *encore* which would be showy and please to the audience. It was we expect from the Jazz Orchestra.

Therefore four very showy *morceaux* should be added (two at the end of the first part and two at the end of the second part).

Stress should be put on the effects of lights and the audience should not be kept in the dark most of the time.

Kay Davis is to sing one song in the coulisses and another song after a while.

I insist that all this is done immediately to avoid bitter and grave consequences.

Do not forget, please, that from my part, I have prepared your reception in Europe and Paris well and fulfilled my duties in 100 per cent.

The unfortunate evening of yesterday was not my fault at all.

Hoping for your best collaboration and relying on your loyalty.

I am very sincerely yours,
P J Borkon



Ellington and the Orchestra on stage at the Palais de Chaillot, 1950

Ellington kept the letter amongst his papers. It was an example of the intense passion with which the French received his music and he was always mindful that he had some new *chef d'oeuvre* to present in concert when he appeared in the capital subsequently.

It was during this trip that Ellington renewed acquaintance with Orson Welles in Paris himself to work on two plays with his new protégé Eartha Kitt. The double bill comprised an anti-Hollywood satire entitled *The Unthinking Lobster* and a version of Marlowe's Faustus entitled *Time Runs*. Welles asked Ellington to compose music for the presentation. In his book, *America's Mistress: Eartha Kitt, Her Life and Times*, John L. Williams writes:

"Unfortunately the demands of touring meant that Ellington himself was unable to devote much time to the project. However he was able to send his regular co-writer, the wonderfully talented Billy Strayhorn, to Paris. Strayhorn was happy about this as his long-term lover Aaron Bridgers had recently moved to the city and just been hired as the pianist at Eartha's favourite hangout, the Mars Club. Strayhorn was given four Orson Welles song titles (though no actual lyrics) to work with: *Me is the Trouble*, *Zing, Zing*, *In the Dungeon of Guilt* and *Song of the Fool*.

Close to show time Welles still hadn't written any lyrics and was considering cutting the songs altogether. At one point he sent Hilton Edwards to Stockholm to meet Ellington and ask for a number of pieces of incidental music. Nothing appears to

have come of that mission, however, at least for the show. Instead Welles went out with Strayhorn to the Café de la Paix and over several drinks came up with the odd, haunting words for *Me is the Trouble* (words surely inspired by his enigmatic new star): *Hungry little trouble, bound in a bubble, yearning to be, be or be free! All that you see, is all about me! Hungry me.*

Strayhorn gave them a mournful blues setting and hoped for the best..."

Was this the first time Ellington had been commissioned to score music for a theatrical drama? Whilst frustrated on this occasion, it was in Paris that Ellington and Strayhorn were eventually to collaborate successfully on just such a project. On Thursday, 29 December 1960, Ellington fronted sixteen French musicians to record music for a production of *Turcaret*, an 18th Century comedy comedy written by Alain-René Lesage. For its revival, Jean Vilar, the director of the Theatre Nationale Populaire commissioned Ellington only a week before the recording session took place. Ellington was in the French capital working on the soundtrack for the film *Paris Blues*, the story of which is covered extensively elsewhere in this special issue.

During recording sessions for the film and the theatre production, Ellington had also appeared as a special guest on the popular singer Jean Sablon's television show broadcast on 17 December by ORTF. *Office de Radiodiffusion Télévision Française*, the national agency charged between 1964 and 1974, with providing public radio and television in France, recorded several television appearances with Ellington.

February, 1963 in Paris saw a flurry of recording activity. Two live albums resulted from the orchestra's stay: *Duke Ellington's Greatest Hits*, released on Reprise and, more famously, *The Great Paris Concert* on Atlantic compiled from performance at The Olympia on 1 and 23 February.

Ellington recorded all three movements of *Night Creature* in Paris during this month, although only the first movement was taken from these sessions for *The Symphonic Ellington*. On 22, February at Barclay Studios, he also supervised and took part in *Duke Ellington's Jazz Violin Session* with string players Stephane Grappelli, Sven Asmussen and Ray Nance. The album was not released until 1976. Five days later, he recorded an album with Alice Babs released only in Europe and receiving its first release in the USA in September 2016.

Perhaps in compensation for trying to steal Strayhorn away from the Ellington organization, Frank Sinatra had offered Duke not only a recording



contract with the singer's own independent record label, Reprise, but also the opportunity to act on behalf of the company's Artists and Repertoire. It was during this stay in Paris that Ellington discharged these responsibilities with enthusiasm: he produced an album by Bud Powell with the pianist accompanied by Gilbert 'Bibi' Rovere on bass and Kansas Fields on drums; a beautiful album with the South African singer Sathima Bea Benjamin, *A Morning in Paris* and over the same twenty four hour period, a second album, *Duke Ellington Presents The Dollar Brand Trio* with the singer's husband Abdullah Ibrahim on piano accompanied by Johnny Gertze on bass and Makaya Ntshoko on drums.

The affection and regard with which Parisians held Ellington was perhaps never more evident than

the way in which the city celebrated his seventieth birthday. Whilst they had to wait a good eight months to do so, the French certainly pulled out all the stops. The Ellington Orchestra performed for a dinner party at L'Alcazar. The performance was recorded by ORTF and released in Japan on laser disc. Clearly, a good time was had by all.

What was the importance of Paris to Ellington? John Edward Hasse argues, "It was psychological, social and musical. As did Strayhorn, Ellington loved France. He once told an interviewer, 'You don't visit France as a tourist, once in your life. You have to kiss the country at least once a year.' "

Four kisses, no doubt...

Real Gone Music is proud to present what is probably the rarest album in the voluminous Duke Ellington discography, his 1963 date with Swedish singer Alice Babs. *Serenade to Sweden*. That year Ellington was hired by the Reprise label as an A&R man, free to sign any artist he wanted and to record them. His first choice was Babs, who, in Ellington's words, was "the most unique artist I know...She sings opera, she sings lieder, she sings what we call jazz and blues, she sings like an instrument, she even yodels, and she can read any and all of it!" For her part, Babs (born Hildur Alice Nilson) had a hit in Sweden when she was only 15 (*Swing It Teacher*), and was an iconic figure in her homeland, appearing in 14 Swedish films from 1938 to 1959. The result of this meeting of legendary musical minds was a sublime cool jazz masterpiece that, sadly, never received a proper release in the U.S. and appears to be the only Ellington album never to be reissued on CD or even digitally, having eluded even the most comprehensive compilers. Needless to say, original copies go for big Swedish krona online, and not just because it's rare; Babs' wordless vocals and scat singing on *The Boy in My Dreams*, *Strange Visitor*, and *Babsie* are positively Ella-worthy, and Ellington's masterful arrangements—at times filigreed with a French horn section— provide the perfect accompaniment. We've added liner notes by Scott Yanow, while the album boasts remastering by Aaron Kannowski. Fascinating for any jazz fan— essential for the Ellington enthusiast.

ALICE BABS & DUKE ELLINGTON SERENADE TO SWEDEN

STREET DATE: **SEPTEMBER 2, 2016**



DIARY – 68 HOURS WITHOUT SLEEP

By Ernest Borneman

Paris – Just read on the ticker tape that the French cabinet has resigned in a huff. Took a taxi to the *Chambre des Députés*, then changed my mind and went to the *Gare du Nord* instead to find out if anyone had remembered Duke Ellington's arrival.

Amazing! In the confusion and hothouse atmosphere prevailing, I would have expected all reporters, newsreel men and radio folk to be covering the political front.

But here at the station, so help me, is the MGM newsreel truck, the Radio Diffusion recording van and a phalanx of photographers from practically every paper in town.

And farther on, on the platform where the *Golden Arrow* is to come in from London, are to be seen trumpeter-playwright-critic Boris Vian with blonde wife Michelle and new-born daughter; copper-haired actress Simone Signoret; honey-coloured Honey Johnson, Rex Stewart's erstwhile blues singer; dark-haired Greco, the mascot of the existentialists; Aaron Bridgers, Billy Strayhorn's pal who now plays piano in Moune's little *boite* in the Latin Quarter; most of the French jazzmen who don't have engagements, and an assortment from Steffie's club, the *Tabou*, the *Lorientais*, and the new *Club Saint Germain-des-Prés* which seems to have become the latest rallying ground of the Parisian jazz armada.

Brings His Pals

When the train comes in, it turns out that the Duke, as usual, has brought his own friends along with him, not counting his English trio and the two remnants of the big unit – Kay Davis and Ray Nance. There is publisher Jack Robbins, pink, chubby and bubbling over with the good news he's just bought a half interest in Duke's *Tempo Music* corporation and will publish the *Perfume Suite*, *Deep South* and *Black, Brown and Beige* as soon as he gets to America; songwriter Kermit Gould, eager to get Duke to the nearest piano and immediately convinced that your correspondent's absentminded humming of a phrase from *Dancers in Love* disqualifies him as a jazz critic ("no sense of beat").

There's also manager Al Celley, eyeing the world through bottle-thick glasses; barber Hernandez, addressing all visitors hopefully in Spanish, and half-a-dozen other hangers-on.



N.O. Jazz Fanfare

Having fought our way out of the station, we are welcomed in the open air by a fanfare of New Orleans jazz – bravely performed against the competition of taxi horns, police whistles and screaming brakes – by Claude Bolling's seven-piece outfit from Steffie's club.

Then, to everyone's amazement, while the recording van of the Radio Diffusion gets in the way of the MGM newsreel truck and everybody begins to stumble over cables, microphones, policemen, and autograph maniacs, Duke decides to sit down on the floor and play snaredrums with the Bolling band.

"I like it here," he says. "I guess I'll stick around a while and play drums for a living."

At this point, however, promoter Jules Borking, who has been trying to find (a) Duke and (b) his car for the last half hour, manages miraculously to make both ends meet at long last and stops the fun with an imperious gesture of his Russian hand. Off we go to Claridge's in the Champs-Élysées in a small cavalcade of honking cars and taxis.

Suite Too Small

The suite which Monsieur Borkin has booked turns out to be (a) on the first floor of the hotel, overlooking the Champs-Élysées and thus too noisy for the daytime sleep of musicians; (b) too small (“only four rooms”); (c) inadequate in the size of its bathtub (“I want to stretch, Celley, I’m a big man”).

Most of these problems resolve themselves, however, when another suite, adjoining, is found and the two are opened up into a continuous flight of rooms which covers most of the front of Claridge’s. This happens just in time to welcome the first influx of visitors, musicians, musicians’ wives, pressmen, photographers, autograph hounds, and curiosity seekers.

Enter Mrs Rex Stewart with friend (French, female).

Duke (to Mrs Rex): Well, how are you? How nice to drop in. How is Fat Stuff?

Mrs Rex: He’s in Germany with an English band.

Duke: What happened to those boys he took along?

Mrs Rex: All I know is that Vernon Storey, the tenorman, is registering graves somewhere in Europe.

Enter waiter with an assortment of bottles. After the first drinks are mixed, Duke leans back and says: “I’ve just begun to write my first French lyric. It’s called *Bleument Bleu*.”

Christine (Mrs Rex’ friend): What?

Duke: *Bleument Bleu*. A bluish sort of blue. Don’t you know your own language?

Christine (in French): There’s no such word. Tell him politely.

Borneman: If there isn’t, it’s high time someone invented it.

Duke: I’ve been writing a lot of lyrics recently. Do you want to hear some?

Borneman: If you now start writing lyrics, too, what’s there left for anyone else to do?

Duke: They can write pretty tunes. I’m going to give all this to Billy Strayhorn to set it to music.

Borneman: A mad world, my masters; what are the lyrics for?

Duke: A little show we’re cooking up called *Pattycake*.

Borneman: The title is a joke, I take it.

Duke: No, sir, a Broadway show. By Perry Watkins. How do you like it? You think it’s too innocent?

Borneman: Innocent my foot. It’s got as much innuendo as *Mary Had a Little*.

Duke: *Innuendo*... that would make a good title, too.

Borneman: What happened to that other show you were working on in New York?

Duke: *Cole Black and the Seven Dwarfs*? It’s going to have book and lyrics by T. Hee and William Cottrell. William Hertz Jr., wants to produce it.

Borneman: How do you like doing shows?

Duke: It’s easier than being on the road with a big unit.

Borneman: Is that why you left the band at home?

Duke: No, I was sick. They took a cyst out of my kidney, and I wanted to take a rest. (Afterthought): And then also I wanted to get back to Europe for a while. It’s good for the morale. It gives you the kind of readjustment of mind that you need in this business. Over there you get too used to the *Hit Parade*. You know it means nothing, and yet after a while, you start paying attention. That’s bad for your music. What you need from time to time is get away and look at the thing from a distance. This is the third time I’ve done it.

Borneman: When were you here last?

Duke: I played the Salle Pleyel here in ’33 and I opened the Palais Chaillot in ’39.

Borneman: How was England?

Duke: We opened at the Palladium in London on June 21, with a show that had Pearl Bailey and the Nicholas Brothers. We had the whole second half of the programme, they never did that before in any English music hall. I had the house band up on the stage, too, conducting them.

Borneman: How about the provinces?

Duke: We did Southampton, Bournemouth, Blackpool, Glasgow, Newcastle, Leicester, Sheffield, Buxton, Manchester, and some others.

Borneman: That’s hardly a holiday.

Duke: It’s easier than touring with a big band.

Celley: You better have a rest right now. I’ll put you to bed for an hour, and you’ll have time to have a good dinner before we go out.

Duke: Where are we going?

Celley: They’ve arranged a date in a little club, just social, no playing, but you got to be there on time. They’re broadcasting.

Duke (resentfully): I’m not sleepy. And what kind of suit shall I wear? Is this a place where they dress?

Borneman: Some persons wear clothes. It’s that kind of place.

Duke: Is that what they call “existentialists”?

Borneman: You might say so.

Duke: Then get me my light grey one and have it pressed before.

Two hours later, while all of us are in the middle of dinner, Duke reappears sleepily in a white bathrobe. By 11 pm not more than one hour late, we are on our way.



19jul1948 Paris

Paris Club St Germain with Aaron Bridges

Once in the car, however, there is another change of plan. Aaron Bridges wants Duke to meet Moune, and so while some 600 persons are waiting for the great man at the Club Saint Germain-des-Près, the four of us find ourselves practically alone in the splendid isolation of Moune's little place in the Quartier Latin.

Peace Shattered

As always, there is Jimmy (*Lover Man*) Davis and George Handy (not the bearded one), and a good bottle of champagne; and things are moving along pretty peacefully until promoter Jules Borkin, livid with rage and still less coherent than usual, busts in with an

escort of Club Saint Germain people to escort Duke back to his appointed date.

At this point, as might have been expected, Borkin's car stalls. By the time it runs again, we are about two hours late, and the Club Saint Germain is more crowded, more steam-sodden, and more explosive in atmosphere.

Dimly among the sweat-stained sweaters and wilting evening dresses, the soaked plaid shirts, and mangled dinner jackets, there can be detected Mme Schiaparelli in a black creation of which there is not much left by now; Richard Wright trying to make a date for tomorrow and sending regards to Langston Hughes, and Rudolf Dunbar over from England for a concert.

Also on deck are Timme Rosenkrantz, shepherding Inez Cavanaugh past the autograph hounds who insist on addressing her as Kay Davis; Louis Williams and Ernie L Nocho from Schubert's out in Montparnasse; Georges Auric, the French composer, with his wife; all sorts of show persons such as Marc Allegret, the film director, and Nicole Vedrès, the critic; actresses like Sylvia Bataille, Simone Signoret, and Suzanne Cloutier; the Bouglione Brothers, circus owners; Annemarie Casalis of the rival Taboo, and once again just about all the musicians and fans from all the joints in town.

Policeman Hired

Forty policemen, hired for the night at 80 francs each, are trying to keep order while Boris Vian's orchestra vainly is trying to pierce the din.

Someone shoves a microphone under Duke's nose as if it were a feed bag, and Duke elegantly passes it on to Rudolf Dunbar who says something in French and hands it on to this correspondent who then is introduced over the air as the "head of the jazz section of the United Nations," and before there is a chance of correction, Auric is on the air, followed by Allegret, and so the night passes in a haze.

Sometime later, between midnight and daybreak, some of us are in a car again, crossing back from the Left Bank to the right under a clear moon that draws circles in the Seine, and there is a party at the air-conditioned Lido.

Jack Robbins is dancing a rumba with Kay Davis – somebody brings in the morning edition of *Combat* in which the party at Saint Germain-des-près is described as "recalling the atmosphere of those sparkling and brilliant evenings of the Second Empire which we have not known since the days of the Duke of Morny."

Club Shuts Down

Somebody from the Paris *Herald Tribune* sweeps Duke off to the bar, and someone else, whom your correspondent takes to be the owner of the club but who turns out to be the promoter of Ram Gopal's Indian dancers, buys drinks for everyone. Then the club shuts down, and everybody feels very hungry and adjourns to Claridge's for sandwiches and coffee.

By the time Duke is ready to retire, it's time for your correspondent to get to work. With a bath, a shave, and three cups of coffee, we have started a new day.

Paris – when my office day ends at 5:30 pm, Duke has been up for a few hours to broadcast over the Swiss and Belgian networks and to lay the

groundwork for his concerts in Brussels and Zurich. Inez Cavanaugh, Duke's one time secretary who has just come back from Spain, has drifted back effortlessly into her old job. The telephone rings every few minutes, reporters, photographers keep shuffling the furniture around, and the French musicians walk in silently and sit in awe.

At 9 pm, the first of two concerts at Salle Pleyel is to start, but by 8:50 pm, Duke is still at the hotel. Yet by 9:25 pm the curtain goes up and the audience, which has expected the full orchestra, gives a great gasp of disappointment at finding a trio on the stage. But within 20 minutes, Duke has captured them.

Speaking with that casual air of complete relaxation which imparts to each carefully rehearsed word a note of spontaneity and improvisation, he introduces his numbers, returns to the piano and stomps 'em off.

Celley's incredibly accomplished and musicianly changes of lighting help keep the pace. And so, of course, does Kay Davis' fine voice and stage presentation plus Ray Nance's trumpet, fiddle, foot and voice clowning, but the main achievement is Duke's.

No Embarrassment

His piano playing, far from the embarrassing virtuosity of the more fashionable piano soloists, has the casual and ingratiating air of a man feeling for new patterns of beat and harmony without losing the fun of playing the piano for his own enjoyment.

Paradoxically enough, the trio with Jack Fallon, bass; Malcolm Mitchell, guitar and Tony Crombie, drums, sounds better during the first three numbers before Duke himself appears on the stage, than with him during the rest of the programme.

Wait For The Beat

Less familiar with the Duke's mannerisms than his own musicians, they show a noticeable tendency of waiting for him to establish the beat – which results in a constantly dragging tempo and takes a lot of the foot-tapping on Duke's part to put them back on the highway.

First item on the programme is *Rockin' in Rhythm* followed by *Caravan*, *The Clothèd Woman* and *Black and Tan Fantasy*, which brings on Ray Nance for a comedy version of the old Bubber Miley solo.

Next, as a tribute to the junior branch of the Ellington hierarchy, Duke plays Mercer's *Moon Mist*, with Nance bopping his way aggressively through baffled audience resistance. But by the time Kay Davis comes out in a white gown with silver sequins to do *Transblucency*, the usual mellow mood has been

established which seems to be almost a trademark of Duke's shows.

What French Admire

The wide octave jumps in the tune and the lovely counterpoint between voice-used-as-instrument and fiddle-used-as-voice are very close to the kind of thing the French admire most in Duke's music and the applause at the end is the biggest so far.

Kay follows with the blues from *Black, Brown and Beige* and Duke breaks it up with a change of tempo leading to *Frankie and Johnny* as a first-act finale.

In the interval there is a great deal of hushed and excited argument among musicians. This is a new Duke and a new kind of presentation to most of the French jazzmen and they are both baffled and intrigued. On the whole, there is agreement that "Duke is still the king" and that "the old man can do no wrong." But everyone seems decided to wait for the second act before giving a final opinion.

Opener Weak

Duke opens part two with an original penned in England, *Jump with the Trio*, which hasn't much to recommend itself except as a curtain raiser. This is followed by the lovely Jelly Roll Mortonish *Ragtime in A-Major* which gives the impression of being used mainly to confuse the ranks of the Dixie-versus-bop controversy.

This leads, with a well-considered change of pace, to *Creole Love Call* with an off-stage vocal by Kay, followed by an onstage version of *I Belong to You*, the only weak item in the programme, for Kay's magnificent operatic voice is no more suited for pop tunes than Bessie Smith's for Italian opera.

Tempo speeds up again with *Things Ain't What They Used to Be* (Ray Nance) and *Dancers in Love* (with the audience participation trick of finger snaps). By now Duke has the public in the palm of his hand and he exploits his advantage by giving them a medley of all the tunes they know best – *I Let A Song Go Out of My Heart*, *Sophisticated Lady*, *Solitude*, etc.

Nance As Comic

Building on the mood he has established, he brings out Nance for two comedy numbers, *Squeeze Me, but Don't Tease Me* and *Just A-Settin' and A-Rockin'*, both of them brilliantly done by one of the great comedians of our day. With the audience screaming for more, Duke goes into the last number on the programme, *Take the 'A' Train* and leaves the stage.

There is so much of an uproar that the curtain is up again within seconds and with carefully calculated

showmanship, Duke gives them a whole third act of five numbers, some of the best in the programme – *Mood Indigo*, *C-Jam Blues*, *Body and Soul* (with Ray's extraordinary stomach ache parody of the bop vocalists), *Turnip or Tulip* (sic) and *Honeysuckle Rose* – a most generous series of encores.

After the show, with little doubt of the venture's success, everybody sooner or later drifts back to the Club Saint Germain-des-près to listen to Boris Vian's orchestra, drink champagne and discuss almost everything except music.



Club St Germain with Juliet Greco and Boris Vian

Walk Helps

By 4 am, this writer is too groggy to do any useful reporting; but after walking home through one of those taxiless Paris nights and finishing up the report on the first two days, it is 8:30 am and time to have breakfast and be off to the office. Some day I shall hire a bed by the season and retire from the music business.

Among the morning mail on 21 July there is a note which reads:

"On the occasion of Duke Ellington's passage through Paris, we have the pleasure of inviting you to a cocktail party given in his honour by the magazine *Présence Africaine* on 21 July in the salons Gallimard, 5, rue Sebastien Bottin at 5:30 pm precisely."

Présence Africaine is a new African review published in France with an English section edited by Richard Wright and "5:30 pm precisely" turns out to be 7:15 pm vaguely.

Welcomed by African drummers and dancers, Duke at long last makes his appearance and is finally

persuaded to play while Honey Johnson takes the vocals. By the time he is released from African bondage, it is 8:15 pm and there is barely time to get back to the hotel for a small snack before the curtain goes up at Salle pleyel for the second concert.

This time the programme is slightly different; the numbers are the same but the order has been changed so as to let Kay come on first without being seen, ie: in the off-stage vocal of *Creole Love Call* and after that the programme builds even better than the night before.

By midnight everybody is back at Claridge's for a press conference which has been scheduled for 11 pm, but by then the journalists have gone, leaving the field to the faithful few, like Jack Robbins, Timme Rosenkrantz and Inez Cavanaugh.

Then the first French musicians and their friends begin to turn up – Hubert and Raymond Fol; Boris Vian and his wife; Colette Gnassie, to whom Kenny Clarke dedicated one of the best bop arrangements ever written, *A La Colette*, and Claude Abaty, one of the founding fathers of the band from which Claude Luter's and Claude Bolling's orchestras (the three Claudes of French jazz) split off some years ago.

On Move Again

By 1:30 am the house is so full that everybody decides to move out again; first lap of the journey: Carrères, a lovely little *boite* with skyrocketed prices, in the Rue Pierre Charron next door to Jacques Fath, the dressmaker, and not unaffected by the proximity.

There, among ladies of the New Look, Duke finds his first chance of relaxing that day, gently lulled to rest by the dulcet strains of Leo Chaulliac's orchestra. But this too comes to an end after an hour or so when a pleasantly décolletéd *Vogue* type gets him out of his chair again with a request, of all things, for *Transblucency*.

Polite as always, Duke obliges, even though Kay Davis isn't there to do the vocal; and once they've got him at the piano, the requests and the photographers follow in close pursuit.

Journey Continues

By about 3 am, Duke decides he wants to say hello to Arthur Briggs, the expatriate trumpet man at *Florence*, and so we are off again on the next lap of that night's journey.

Briggs is still a fine trumpet player, although the band, aside from Emmanuel Jude on bass and Robert Montmarché on drums, hasn't much to offer.

There is a good deal of swapped memories of the old days and in the midst of it Jackie Vermont, a French trumpet player, asks Duke what he thinks of be-bop. Duke thinks it over a long time and then says:

"I don't think I want to consider it as a technique. All I can say is that it's part of the emancipation of the American Negro."

At this point something happens that throws that statement into relief. An American entertainer, who has been around a long time and owns a share or two in some of the most successful clubs in Paris, arrives in a somewhat advanced state of elation and says to Duke, "There you are, Golden Boy, I dig ya. All surrounded by the white folks. That makes you happy, eh?"

Awkward Lapse

For a while, the conversation stops with that kind of awkwardness which always happens when liquor opens up the crack in someone's heart. Then Duke gets up and as he goes out, the cloakroom girl asks him for an autograph.

She has no paper, she says, and Duke with great charm and without any ostentatiousness, pulls out a thousand franc note, signs it and asks, "Will this do?" And then, with a shrug, "Man, but I'm hungry. Now let's go and eat that famous onion soup."

So between 5 and 6 am, we are at the Cloche d'Or eating *soupe d'ognion* and talking about the death of kings. By the time the soup is eaten and the stories are finished, it's time to get back to the hotel and pack.

One-Niters Slated

At 9:30 am on 22 July, the train leaves for Brussels. Duke is going to play one night there, one night in Antwerp, another one in Brussels, one in Zurich, one in Geneva and then via Paris go back to the United States.

Everybody wants to see more of Europe, except the English boys in the band who want to go to New York and your correspondent who wants to go to bed.

About the Author

Ernest Wilhelm Julius Borneman (12 April, 1915-4 June, 1995) was a German crime writer, filmmaker, anthropologist and jazz critic. A member of the Communist Party of Germany, Borneman was forced to flee the country for the UK in 1933 after the Nazis came to power. During his years in London, Borneman became preoccupied with jazz, completing a 580-page typescript entitled Swing Music: An Encyclopaedia of Jazz.

In 1976, he received a doctorate for a comprehensive study of the origins and future of Patriarchy. He became an important academic in the study of psychology. During the final decades of his life, Borneman lived in Austria. He committed suicide at the age of 80 due to a tragic love affair with a younger colleague.

Paris Blues: Ellington, Armstrong, and Saying It with Music

By Krin Gabbard

With overlapping careers that dominated jazz throughout its most turbulent years, Duke Ellington (1899–1974) and Louis Armstrong (1901–1971) had surprisingly little interaction. They spent the most time together when they stayed in the same hotel in Paris during the shooting of the film *Paris Blues* (released in 1961) and then a few months later when they followed up on conversations begun in Paris and recorded together back home. Specifically, Armstrong and Ellington worked together in Paris during the last weeks of 1960 and the first week of 1961⁽¹⁾. Their recording session took place at the RCA studios in New York on April 3 and 4, 1961⁽²⁾.

The Dignity of the Trickster

The Great Summit, the title of the Armstrong/Ellington recording session in its most recent reissue, solved the problem of bringing together two performers with well-established musical traditions of their own by first placing Ellington in the pianist's chair in Armstrong's sextet. Producer Bob Thiele then saw to it that the band recorded nothing but Ellington's compositions. The band belonged to Louis, but the music was Duke's. According to those who were present, the musicians were both tired at the time of the recording session, and not surprisingly, the music is a bit ragged in places. There are also moments of the brilliance that one would expect when the two men do what they do best. Ellington creates new versions of his compositions for a sextet that also included Barney Bigard, the clarinetist and saxophonist who had been a key member of the Ellington orchestra from 1928 until 1942. Ellington's piano work with Armstrong's group is consistently dependable and at times even surprising as he finds new ways of working through his old material. At one point he even seems to be alluding to the style of Thelonious Monk.

Armstrong is also himself at *The Great Summit*, deploying his usual exuberance as a singer and a trumpeter as he struts through the Ellington canon. As always, Armstrong is a quick study, in full control even when he is playing tunes for the first time. Anyone who knows the lyrics to Ellington's songs, however, can hear Armstrong making significant departures from what was originally written. On *I'm Beginning to See the Light*, for example, the original lyrics read, "But now that your lips are burning mine, I'm beginning to see the light." Armstrong, however, sings, "Now that your chops are burnin' mine." Later, instead of ending a phrase with the complete lyric—"I'm beginning to see the light"—Armstrong suggests a broader range of meaning by abbreviating the phrase and inflecting it as: "I'm beGINnin'!"

In short, Ellington plays the dignified leader and Armstrong plays the trickster. Armstrong's tricksterisms were an essential part of his performance persona. On one level, Armstrong's grinning, mugging, and exaggerated body language made him a much more congenial presence, especially to racist audiences who might otherwise have found so confident a performer to be disturbing, to say the least. When Armstrong put his trumpet to his lips, however, he was all business. The servile gestures disappeared as he held his trumpet erect and flaunted his virtuosity, power, and imagination. Even in one of his earliest appearances on film, *A Rhapsody in Black and Blue* (1932), a nine-minute short subject in which he is costumed as a grotesque caricature of an African native, he is not always a comic figure. And at those moments in the film when he seems most eager to please with his vocal performances, his mugging is sufficiently exaggerated to suggest an ulterior motive. Lester Bowie has suggested that Armstrong is essentially "slipping a little poison into the coffee" of those who think they are watching a harmless darkie. (The crucial scenes from *A Rhapsody in Black and Blue* as well as Bowie's commentary appear in *Satchmo* (1988), a video documentary directed by Kendrick Simmons and Gary Giddins. Throughout his career in films, Armstrong continued to subvert received notions of African American identity, signifying on the camera while creating a style of trumpet performance that was virile, erotic, dramatic, and playful. No other black entertainer of Armstrong's generation – with the possible exception of Ellington – brought so much intensity and charisma to his performances. But because Armstrong did not change his masculine presentation after the 1920s, many of his gestures became obsolete and lost their revolutionary edge. For many black and white Americans in the 1950s and 1960s, he was an embarrassment. In the early days of the twenty-first century, when Armstrong is regularly cast as a heroicized figure in the increasingly heroicizing narrative of jazz history, we should remember that he was regularly asked to play the buffoon when he appeared on films and television. *Paris Blues* would have been a remarkable film simply for the participation of Ellington and Armstrong. The film is all the more remarkable for providing Armstrong with a rare opportunity to display some dignity. The film effectively begins when Wild Man Moore (Armstrong) arrives in Paris, and it ends when he departs. Cheering throngs of musicians serenade him as he arrives at the train station. When a small band performs for him (they play a composition written specifically for the film by Ellington and Billy

Strayhorn), Moore/Armstrong extends his trumpet out of the window of the train and magniloquently inserts his own phrases into the music. Moments later the film's protagonist, Ram Bowen (Paul Newman), walks onto the train and is greeted warmly by Moore. Although they joke amiably ("This town agrees with you. What is it? The chicks or the wine?" "Oh, it's both, man."), Moore is in no way the obsequious dark companion of the white hero. In fact, Bowen has come to see Moore to ask for his help. As an aspiring composer of "serious" music, Bowen hopes to gain an audience with René Bernard (played in the film by André Luguet), a grand old man of classical music in Paris. With Bernard's help, Bowen seeks to have his own music played in a concert setting. So great is the reputation of Wild Man Moore that he has the power to intercede with Bernard on behalf of a young acolyte. The jazz trumpeter's special relationship with a character based on Nadia Boulanger, the great teacher of aspiring composers, may reflect Armstrong's interactions during his European travels in the 1930s and afterwards, when he regularly mixed with the conservatory-trained musicians who recognized his special talents as a musician. At least in *Paris Blues*, these interactions bear fruit. Before the film is over, Moore has arranged a meeting between Bernard and Bowen.

Ellington never appears in *Paris Blues*, but his music is everywhere. We hear Ram Bowen's band playing complete versions of *Mood Indigo* and Billy Strayhorn's *Take the 'A' Train*. When Bowen plays a recording of his own music, it is a composition by Ellington and Billy Strayhorn. And numerous scenes are backed up by gorgeous performances of an expanded Ellington orchestra playing Ellington and Strayhorn's music. The two composers, however, use their music to engage in a dialogue with the film at a few crucial moments. At one point, Ellington may even be engaging in a dialogue with Strayhorn. In *Paris Blues*, Ellington actually plays the trickster. At least in this film, Armstrong and Ellington have traded places.

The Studio Changes Its Mind

Although he worked in films as early as 1929, during his fifty years as a composer Duke Ellington wrote soundtracks for only four feature-length films. Of the four, Ellington had the most control over the score for *Paris Blues*. Working also with Strayhorn, Ellington wrote his first soundtrack for Otto Preminger's *Anatomy of a Murder* (1959). Ordinarily, a film composer is handed an edited copy of a film and then given approximately six weeks to write and record a synchronized sound-track⁽³⁾. Preminger, however, persuaded Ellington and Strayhorn to spend time in Ishpeming, Michigan, while the film was being shot⁽⁴⁾.

He also convinced the two to write a great deal of music even though they could not have known exactly how it would be used. Some of this music appeared on the soundtrack album for the film and has also been widely praised. For the actual film of *Anatomy of a Murder*, however, Ellington and Strayhorn's music was given to music editor Richard Carruth, who used only a small portion of what was written⁽⁵⁾. There is no music at all in the film's long courtroom scenes. When the music is actually heard on the soundtrack, it occasionally sounds extraneous, and in some cases, even inappropriate.

Shortly after *Anatomy of a Murder* was released, Ellington admitted that he was less than satisfied with his work as a composer for films. He is quoted in an article in the *American Weekly Entertainment Guide*: "Music in pictures should say something without being obviously music, you know, and this was all new to me. I'll try another one and then I'll show them" (DEDBD, p. 407). Ellington has accurately characterized the theory and practice of film music. As Claudia Gorbman has suggested, a Hollywood film's extradiegetic score is almost always "invisible and 'inaudible,'" and the musical sounds are supposed to be "just there, oozing from the images we see" ⁽⁶⁾.

For *Paris Blues*, Ellington and Strayhorn used what they learned from *Anatomy of a Murder*, showing real competence with the conventions of scoring for classical Hollywood. They would never again have such an opportunity. In Ellington's scores for two subsequent films, *Assault on a Queen* (1966) and *A Change of Mind* (1969), the music was as extensively edited as it was for *Anatomy of a Murder*. Only Ellington and not his band were contracted for *Assault*, and although Ellington revived several of his classic compositions for *A Change of Mind*, the film features only fragments of extradiegetic music, much of it obscured by dialogue. But, for *Paris Blues*, producer Sam Shaw gave Ellington and Strayhorn the same stature ordinarily granted to established film composers. What one hears on the screen is exactly what the two intended.

Billy Strayhorn played a central role in composing the music for *Paris Blues* from the outset. *Paris Blues* was an ideal project for Strayhorn, an openly gay composer and pianist who worked consistently in the shadow of Ellington. From 1939 until his death in 1967, Strayhorn had a hand in the majority of Ellington's most important works. As his biographer David Hajdu has observed, Strayhorn was a major figure among expatriate American jazz musicians in Paris and regularly travelled to Paris, where he spent time with pianist Aaron Bridgers, who had been his lover in the 1940s ⁽⁷⁾. Bridgers moved to Paris in 1948 and eventually became the house pianist at the Mars Club, a tiny Paris cabaret where on any given night

“the clientele was nearly half gay” (8). Bridgers actually appears in *Paris Blues* as the pianist in Ram Bowen’s band, although Ellington and Strayhorn are the only pianists heard on the soundtrack. The presence of Bridgers as well as the gay couples who appear in the opening scene of *Paris Blues* suggest that the club in the film may have been at least in part inspired by the Mars Club.

Other aspects of *Paris Blues* must have appealed to Strayhorn, at least at first. The film’s attempt to place jazz within an art discourse was probably as important to Strayhorn as it was to Ellington. Strayhorn worked closely with classical musicians in Paris, and one of the few LPs released under his own name, *The Peaceful Side*, was recorded in Paris with a string quartet. His solo compositions were always much closer to the classical mainstream than were Ellington’s; Strayhorn’s *Suite for the Duo*, recorded for the Mainstream label by the Mitchell/Ruff Duo in 1969, is an excellent example of his ability to fuse jazz with more European forms. Some of the early work on the music for *Paris Blues* was in fact directed by Strayhorn, who arrived in Paris a month before Ellington. A close inspection of the scores for *Paris Blues*, most of them in the Smithsonian Institution, reveals that a large portion of the music is in Strayhorn’s hand.

Most of what Ellington and Strayhorn wrote and recorded during the early stages of their work on *Paris Blues* was for the actors who play musicians on camera. Paul Newman and Sidney Poitier, who plays the tenor saxophonist in Ram Bowen’s band, convincingly mime playing their instruments because they could practise with recordings supplied to them before rehearsals began in Paris. This music was probably recorded in Hollywood during the summer of 1960 and in Paris later that year. In May 1961, when all filming had been completed and Ellington had resumed touring with his band, Ellington and Strayhorn received an edited copy of the film and quickly wrote the score for *Paris Blues*. A few days later they took an expanded version of the Ellington orchestra into the Reeves Sound Studios in New York and recorded about thirty minutes of extradiegetic music.

Paris Blues was based on a novel written in 1957 by Harold Flender (9). The main character in the novel is an African American tenor saxophonist named Eddie Jones who plays regularly in a Paris nightclub. Entertaining no desire to be anything other than a working musician, he plays mostly Dixieland and traditional jazz. He meets and gradually falls in love with a black American schoolteacher, Connie, who is vacationing in Paris. Even though Eddie has been living happily in Paris for several years and appreciates its tolerance for blacks, at the end of the novel he

decides to return to the States and marry Connie. The novel also introduces the trumpet player Wild Man Moore, who is clearly modelled after Louis Armstrong, long before he was cast in the film. While in Paris, Moore offers Eddie a job that he first refuses, but after Eddie decides to follow Connie he knows that he can work with the Wild Man when he returns. The film takes almost all of this directly from the novel.

The film of *Paris Blues* retains the black saxophonist Eddie, but it greatly expands the novel’s character Benny, a Jewish pianist in his fifties who is a member of Eddie’s band. In the novel, when Connie arrives in Paris with a large group of tourists, she rooms with Lillian, a middle-aged, white, unmarried schoolteacher. When Lillian insists on accompanying Connie to hear Eddie perform at his club, Benny does Eddie a favour by latching on to Lillian so that Eddie can devote all of his attention to Connie. A little drunk and filled with the desire to *épater la bourgeoisie*, Benny shows the wilder side of Paris to Lillian. He even takes her to an all-night nudist swimming club where she is titillated almost as much as she is offended. Although Benny later says that he regrets his crude treatment of Lillian and wants to apologize, nothing comes of the relationship. Lillian goes back to the States alone.

Benny, the minor character in the novel, becomes Ram Bowen the handsome young (Jewish?) trombonist played by Paul Newman, and Lillian the old maid schoolteacher becomes Lillian the beautiful young divorcée played by Joanne Woodward. Eddie Jones the handsome young black saxophone player and Connie the beautiful young schoolteacher make the transition from the novel relatively unscathed – in the film they are played by Sidney Poitier (as Eddie Cook) and Diahann Carroll. The adaptation of the novel by Lulla Adler and the screenplay by Jack Sher, Irene Kamp, and Walter Bernstein also include the significant addition of Ram Bowen’s desire to become a “serious” composer. Although he has enlisted Eddie as his arranger, it is also clear that Ram Bowen is the leader of the group and much more an “artist” than Eddie.

Ellington probably did not know about these aspects of the script when he signed on to do the music. He had been told that the film would dramatically depart from the novel by romantically pairing Paul Newman with Diahann Carroll and Sidney Poitier with Joanne Woodward. The vestiges of this romance are still present in an early scene when Ram is much more interested in Connie than in Lillian. Even earlier, during the opening credits, the film seems to be preparing audiences for interracial romance by repeatedly showing non-traditional couples in the Paris nightclub where Ram Bowen’s band performs. We see people of all ages and ethnicities, including male and female homosexuals, interracial couples, and a young

man with a much older woman. Intentionally or not, this multiply integrated scene was also an idealized reflection of the milieu inhabited by Billy Strayhorn. As the progress of the film's script should make clear, however, the Hollywood of 1961 was not prepared to accept so much tolerance for non-traditional romantic pairings (10). In a scene that takes place about twenty minutes into the film, the camera again pans the faces in the club, but there are absolutely no interracial or same-sex couples. There are not even any older people. This sequence was shot after the decision had been made to dispense with the interracial love affairs (11).

Ellington agreed to cancel a number of appearances and fly to Paris to do the film's music largely because he was attracted to a story about romance between the races. Sam Shaw said, "Duke thought that was an important statement to make at that time. He liked the idea of expressing racial equality in romantic terms. That's the way he thought himself" (12). For similar reasons he later agreed to write music for *A Change of Mind*, a film about a black man who has the brain of a white person inserted into his skull. Ellington was upset when the executives at United Artists lost their nerve and colour coded the couples in *Paris Blues* according to more conventional standards (13). Billy Strayhorn may have been disappointed for similar reasons, including the transformation of the nightclub from a tolerant, heterogeneous space into a club with more conventional clientele.

Is Jazz Art?

I also suspect that Ellington and Strayhorn were upset by the film's suggestions that jazz lacks the "seriousness" of classical music. The final print of *Paris Blues* preserves the opening credits sequence with its daring mix of couples, but in the larger context of the film's conservatism the club in this early scene might just as well represent a degraded milieu that the trombonist hero hopes to escape by becoming a serious composer. The dedication of Ram Bowen (Rimbaud? Ram [a trom]Bone?) to art – and Eddie Cook's lack of interest in "serious" music – is established in the first scene after the credits. As the owner, Marie Séoul (Barbara Laage), descends into her cabaret after an early morning trip to the market, Ram is playing a melodic phrase that will later be established as the *Paris Blues* theme. With Eddie, Ram has been working all night on his composition. Asserting that the melody is too heavy, Eddie says that he will score it for an oboe. Ram protests what he considers a criticism of his music and insists that Eddie tell him whether or not he really likes the composition. Eddie seems more interested in calling it a night. In an intriguing reference to this exchange, Ellington and Strayhorn (probably Strayhorn alone) score the *Paris Blues* theme for an oboe when it appears later in the film.

This first stretch of background music, including the oboe solo, is not heard until thirty minutes into the film. Lasting approximately six minutes, the music quickly reveals how thoroughly Ellington and Strayhorn had learned the craft of composing for films after their mixed success with *Anatomy of a Murder*. Like all background music from classical Hollywood, the softly soothing version of the *Paris Blues* theme creates an appropriate mood, even before the audience knows exactly what to feel. As Kathryn Kalinak has observed, film composers have always struggled to find the right moment to introduce a segment of extradiegetic music (14). Often a composer will "sneak" the music in softly where the audience is unlikely to notice its appearance. This is exactly what Ellington and Strayhorn accomplish with the early stirrings of romance between Ram Bowen and Lillian. The same music continues as the camera picks up the romance between Eddie Cook and Connie and climaxes when we see Lillian the next morning in Ram's apartment wearing his dressing gown. Each of the transitions between the two sets of couples is clearly marked in the music. Ellington and Strayhorn have even written somewhat "funkier" music for the black couple. When the camera first moves to Poitier and Carroll after the two couples have separated, Ray Nance can be heard making the kind of vernacular, growling sounds on his trumpet that were originally associated with Ellington's "jungle music" in the 1920s.

Documents in the Smithsonian show that Ellington and Strayhorn knew exactly where each moment of their music would fit in the final film. There are several pages from the shooting script that are carefully marked with timings suggesting that someone (the handwriting is not Ellington's or Strayhorn's) had stop watched parts of the film so that the music could be precisely correlated with the action. At one point in the script, when Connie is telling Ram about her affection for Eddie, Ellington has written next to her line, "Pretty," a concise description of what happens in the extradiegetic score during her speech.

The choice of an oboe for the *Paris Blues* theme is significant in a score so closely tailored to the dialogue and action (15). Ellington and Strayhorn had not used an oboe since 1946 when they wrote the score for *Beggar's Holiday*, a musical adaptation of John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*. The show opened in New York at the Broadway Theatre on 26 December, 1946, to mixed reviews and closed after four-teen weeks and 108 performances (16). (Walter van de Leur has pointed out that the section of the score for oboe, strings, French horn, and harp is entirely in Strayhorn's hand.) (17) The connection between a line of dialogue about an oboe and the presence of the instrument in the extradiegetic version of the same music suggests that Ellington and Strayhorn were blurring the distinction



Billy Strayhorn and director Martin Ritt on the set of Paris Blues

between the diegetic and extradiegetic scores. In the script, Ram Bowen is writing a composition called *Paris Blues* that he wants to see performed as a concert piece. When the film is approximately half over, Bowen puts on a record of his *Paris Blues*. He is in his apartment with Lillian, who has asked to hear something that he has written. The audience then hears the same theme by Ellington and Strayhorn that has been extradiegetically featured throughout the film. (The actual music we hear on Ram's record was written and recorded after the scenes with Newman and Woodward had been shot and edited.)

On the one hand, the matching of diegetic and extradiegetic music is completely consistent with classical Hollywood practice: it is common in the many biographies about composers, and movies often introduce a theme diegetically before it becomes a part of the extradiegetic score. In *Casablanca*, for example, Max Steiner repeatedly used phrases from *As Time Goes By*, but only after the song had been sung on camera by Dooley Wilson. On the other hand, Ellington and Strayhorn could be using an oboe to wink at those in the audience who recall that Eddie Cook, the black musician, had suggested an oboe as a way of correcting the heaviness of a theme that a white musician had played on his trombone.

According to *Paris Blues* producer Sam Shaw, director Martin Ritt made few demands on Ellington, but he specifically requested that Ram Bowen's trombone have a smooth sound with a strong vibrato in the tradition of Tommy Dorsey (18). Shaw did not speculate on why Ritt made this stipulation except to say that Ritt liked this kind of sound. Perhaps Ritt was not familiar with the work of Lawrence Brown or did not know that Brown had re-joined the Ellington orchestra during the summer of 1960. (Brown had earlier been with Ellington between 1932 and 1951.) Although Brown played an American trombone with a wide bore, he could surely have produced the mellow, singing sound we associate with a trombonist such as Dorsey, who played on a French trombone with a more narrow bore. Perhaps Ritt was aware of the striking difference between the rôle of the trombone in jazz as opposed to the more classical sound associated with the instrument outside of jazz and essentially brought back into jazz by Tommy Dorsey. Ellington's growling, talking trombonists, such as Charlie Irvis, Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton, and Booty Wood, had their roots in the vaudeville traditions of early jazz when the trombone was a novelty instrument. Farting, belching, and braying, the trombone was often the clown of the instrument family. In the first jazz recordings of 1917 by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, trombonist Eddie Edwards provides many of the appropriate sounds for tunes such as *Livery Stable Blues* and *Barnyard Blues*. A man like Dorsey was able to restore a certain

stateliness to the sound of the instrument, even though one could argue that Lawrence Brown and numerous other African American musicians had already brought a great deal of artistry to the instrument from within a jazz context.

Ritt's preference for the "white" Dorsey sound may be another example of the colour anxiety that drove the filmmakers to back away from interracial romance as *Paris Blues* took shape. It may also have reflected the needs of a script in which Ram Bowen hopes to transcend jazz and write classical music. Tommy Dorsey might have seemed a more likely candidate for advanced study in harmony and counterpoint than would, say, Tricky Sam Nanton. At any rate, the white trombonist Murray McEachern was brought in early to play the first solos that Paul Newman mimes. (To further complicate Ritt's distinction between white and black trombonists, McEachern would later become a regular member of the Ellington orchestra.) McEachern's trombone can later be heard at a key moment in the film's final background music. Trombonist Billy Byers, who is also white, dubbed in solos during location shooting in Paris while he was working as the film's "musical adviser" (DEDBD, p. 433). Since the film insists on the strict separation of jazz and classical music, and since this division is embodied in the character of Ram Bowen, Ellington and Strayhorn may have found a place where they could have their say. Since both composers would have rejected the kinds of distinctions between jazz and classical music that are central to the ideology of *Paris Blues*, they may have adopted the introduction of an oboe into their score because it is recommended by a musician who has no pretensions about art (19). They accepted a musical choice spoken on screen in a spirit of creative pragmatism by a character played by Sidney Poitier, even though the choice was effectively made by the screenwriters.

The film's attitude toward jazz and art is articulated explicitly and with great authority by René Bernard when Bowen is finally ushered into his quarters toward the end of the film. Although Bernard says that he has long admired Bowen's work as a jazz trombonist, he is only guarded in his praise of the written score that Wild Man Moore delivered to him. When he characterizes it as a "jazz piece of a certain charm and [pause] melody" he sounds uncomfortable. Pushed by Bowen to declare whether or not his work is any good, Bernard tells him that there is a great deal of difference between what a jazz musician can write and "an important piece of serious music." He urges the young trombonist to devote a few years to developing his craft in Paris, studying "composition, harmony, theory, counterpoint." The scene ends with Bernard giving Bowen some small encouragement that he might some day become "a serious composer" instead of a

“lightweight,” Bowen’s self-description after he hears Bernard’s faint praise for his jazz tunes.

In *Paris Blues*, jazz cannot be an art form even if it has been written by Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn. Many in the classical music community of Paris in 1961 would probably have agreed with Bernard – jazz can be charming and melodic but not truly serious (20). If we are to accept the film’s message, then Ellington and Strayhorn simply have a “gift for melody.” In *Paris Blues*, that melody is the one the audience has been hearing all along, the *Paris Blues* theme, both diegetically from Ram Bowen and extradiegetically on the soundtrack.

Thoroughly discouraged by his conversation with René Bernard, Bowen arrives at Lillian’s hotel to tell her he is prepared to return with her to the United States immediately. In the States he will simply play his horn and abandon his dream of becoming a great composer. Eddie independently arrives at the decision that he too will return and join Connie a few weeks after she leaves Paris. Later, at a party with his musician friends, Ram tells Eddie what Bernard has said about his music. In a moment that is, at least for the purposes of this essay, charged with significance, Ram brushes aside Eddie’s attempts to question Bernard’s authority. The logical argument that the old Frenchman has used an inappropriate aesthetic to judge jazz in general and Ram’s *Paris Blues* in particular is raised only to be rejected. With a noticeable lack of conviction, Eddie says, “He’s longhair, and he doesn’t always know what he’s talking about.” Ram replies definitively, “He knows,” and the film’s debate on cultural aesthetics comes to an end.

On the one hand, the chickens have come home to roost for the view that Ellington belongs within the European musical tradition where some critics – beginning in the 1930s with R. D. Darrell and Constant Lambert – have sought to place him (21). As Scott DeVeaux has written, the particular art discourse for jazz that emerged in the 1950s could only succeed if jazz was ultimately regarded as “an immature and imperfectly realized junior partner to European music” (22). A more Afro-centric view of jazz, such as Amiri Baraka would forcefully present two years later in his *Blues People*, was not yet widely available (23). At least it did not seem to be known to the writers of *Paris Blues*. On the other hand, Ellington never saw himself as part of the European tradition and even ridiculed those who claimed that he was (24). Nevertheless, almost the entire Ellington discography stands as a refutation of René Bernard’s argument that a “jazz piece” cannot be “an important piece of serious music.”

In the final scene of *Paris Blues*, Lillian is waiting for Ram at the train station along with Eddie and

Connie. When Ram arrives shortly before the train is due to depart, Lillian can tell from his face that he has decided not to leave with her. Directly behind them, workmen are papering over the poster that depicts the laughing face of Wild Man Moore. As alto saxophonist Johnny Hodges and the Ellington orchestra play the *Paris Blues* theme behind his words, Ram explains that he has decided to follow the advice of Bernard and remain in Paris to study: “Lillian, I got to follow through with the music. I got to find out how far I can go. And I guess that means alone.” After an emotional farewell speech, Lillian rushes to her train. The solo statement of the theme is now taken over by the trombone of Murray McEachern, whose sound has been associated throughout with the character of Ram Bowen. The music swells as Eddie bids farewell to both Lillian and Connie. Then a new theme emerges, one that recalls Ellington’s many train songs, including *Lightnin’* (1932), *Daybreak Express* (1933), and *Happy-Go-Lucky Local* (1946). Unlike the more lyrical, almost mournful *Paris Blues* melody, the new theme is fast, dissonant, and dominated by percussion. While *Paris Blues* is primarily the work of Strayhorn, the new train theme is almost surely the work of Ellington. The *Paris Blues* theme is not entirely erased by the train tune, however. McEachern’s trombone can still be heard playing fragments of *Paris Blues* on top of the now dominant train theme. This juxtaposition continues for about sixty seconds as the train departs and Eddie and Ram leave the station. In the film’s final shot, the poster with Wild Man’s face has been almost entirely papered over with a new billboard.

I would suggest a number of interpretations for this final scene in *Paris Blues*. First, the closing music can be imagined as emanating from the screen, “oozing from the images we see” (25) as an expression of the conflicting emotions of the characters. The *Paris Blues* theme might represent the feelings that the lovers have for each other, while the train theme looks toward the future and the need for the characters to get on with their lives. This final music could also be what Ram Bowen will write once he has transcended the pain of his experiences with Lillian and completed his study of “composition, harmony, theory, counterpoint” as recommended by René Bernard. This interpretation combines a rationalist belief in conservatory training with the romantic myth of suffering as the key to artistic creation. Bowen will, according to this reading, write music that will cover over the “charming” but “lightweight” jazz exemplified by Wild Man Moore/Louis Armstrong, whose image is erased as Bowen sets off to become a “serious” artist. Appropriately, the new billboard that is covering over the face of Armstrong is an advertisement for the Librarie Larousse, the leading French publisher of canonical literature at that time. The jazz of Ram

Bowen and Wild Man Moore, the film tells us, will be replaced by something more established and more literate once Bowen emerges as a serious composer.

I strongly suspect, however, that Ellington wrote the music that ends *Paris Blues* as an answer to the statements of René Bernard. Remember that Bernard had said he liked the melody of *Paris Blues* but little else. So Ellington gives us Strayhorn's melody in all its glory as played by the trombonist, but he audaciously covers it over with another entire piece. The pretensions of the white musician who wants to rise above jazz is overwhelmed with rousing African American rhythms and harmonies. This is the composer's response to the demand that the trombone sound be colour coded as white. It is also a response to the film's squeamishness about mixing black and white as well as jazz and classical.

But the music is also a key to understanding the dynamics of the long collaboration between Ellington and Strayhorn. At the finale of *Paris Blues*, the lovely Parisian music of Strayhorn – at its most ravishing thanks to the alto saxophone of that single greatest interpreter of Strayhorn's music, Johnny Hodges – is overpowered by the Ellington Express. In scrupulously chronicling the evolving relationship between Ellington and Strayhorn, Hajdu has found strains of ambivalence even where there was a great deal of love and respect. Although he is circumspect about the issue throughout his biography, Hajdu implies that Strayhorn willingly gave up his identity as a composer and musician to protect his privacy as a gay man. He would never have been able to lead the uncloseted life he embraced had he become "Billy Strayhorn and his Orchestra." He knew and accepted the price for ensuring his privacy, but Strayhorn often resented the extent to which Ellington took credit for his work. The opening credits for *Paris Blues*, for example, simply read "Music by Duke Ellington." Conversely, Ellington must have felt vulnerable by relying on Strayhorn to provide beautiful compositions and arrangements that had become essential to the success of the Ellington orchestra. In Paris, where Strayhorn was right at home but Ellington was a stranger, Ellington was even more dependent on Strayhorn, who often disappeared for days at a time to enjoy himself with friends (26). At least on an unconscious level, Ellington may have used the last moments of *Paris Blues* to establish a degree of independence from Strayhorn by drowning out his composing partner's music with his own. Of course, Ellington would become extraordinarily prolific and creative after Strayhorn's death in 1967, but when he was writing music for *Paris Blues*, in 1961, Ellington had no way of knowing what his music would be without the contributions of Strayhorn.

It must be remembered, however, that the final musical moments in *Paris Blues* were entirely conceived and executed as part of a film score. None of the Ellington orchestra's subsequent recordings of material from the film includes the juxtaposition of the trombone solo and the train theme. The music is unique to the film. Regardless of the degree to which Ellington and Strayhorn worked together or at cross-purposes in *Paris Blues*, they managed to express themselves politely but sharply. By pulling out all the stops at the end of *Paris Blues*, the composers surely made the filmmakers happy at the same time that they subtly destroyed the film's dichotomies of jazz and art. The "stylistic excess" of the Ellington/Strayhorn composition that ends *Paris Blues* can be understood in terms of an argument that Caryl Flinn makes in her discussion of music in film noir and melodrama: "Stylistic excesses and unconventional formal practices have often been identified as the purported means by which cinematic content (e.g., story lines) can be politicized and rendered subversive" (27). Accordingly, the critique of *Paris Blues* that I hear in the film's final music depends on the excesses of a music that completely overwhelms every other aspect of the film, including the *Paris Blues* theme itself.

When *Paris Blues* was released in November 1961, the critics were mostly dismissive. John Tynan wrote in *Down Beat*, for example, that it was "dramatic nonsense" (28). As has always been the case with the film scores credited to Ellington, critics have chosen to write only about the music for *Paris Blues* as separate from the film. Through this one film score, however, the real achievement of Ellington and Strayhorn can only be appreciated within the film's specific context.

Ellington was capable of sending out ambiguous messages, inviting the hip members of his audience to decode in ways unavailable to the rest. I would argue that his achievement in *Paris Blues* was foreshadowed by the effect he created with *Goin' Up*, the composition he wrote specifically for *Cabin in the Sky* (29). The film was released in 1943, just after the great Carnegie Hall concert where Ellington compellingly combined the sacred and the vernacular in *Black Brown and Beige*. Like *Green Pastures* before it, however, *Cabin in the Sky* was built on the old idea that African Americans must choose between the church and the dance hall. Ellington surely knew what he was doing when he wrote *Goin' Up* for *Cabin in the Sky*. Although the tune is played in a dance hall, it features a preacherly trombone solo by Lawrence Brown. The congregation of dancers even engages in some churchly call and response with the trombonist. The music undermines the film's naive dichotomies by joyously fusing the sacred with the profane. One could cite numerous if less flamboyant examples of Ellington's irony and his subtle habit of "signifying"

on those who would hold him to standards other than his own. His droll deflections of extravagant praise for his composing skills are a typical example. Ellington's conventionalized assurance to his audiences that he and "all the kids in the band love you madly" is also typical as is the ironic "finger-snapping, earlobe-tilting bit" with which he often closed his concerts in his last decades (30).

Louis Armstrong also signified on audiences, filmmakers, and the classical repertoire. Like Ellington, he was able to send out a variety of messages, some of them more easily decoded by certain groups than by others. In almost all his film appearances, the trickster Armstrong presents the face of the seemingly obsequious jester at one moment and the heroic sound of the trumpet king at the next. In *Paris Blues*, however, Armstrong speaks as the peer of classical musicians despite the fact that his music is subsequently denigrated; he is denied the opportunity to play the trickster. Ellington, by contrast, was not to be denied. It is Ellington who becomes the trickster, signifying on filmmakers who lost their nerve when faced with the controversy of interracial romance and then forswore the claim that jazz is art. *Paris Blues* tells us that there is a difference between the jazz musician and the serious artist. Both Armstrong and Ellington, however, spent their long careers revealing the absurdity of that distinction.

Notes

I am extremely grateful for the contributions that Robert O'Meally, Farah Jasmine Griffin, Brent Edwards, David Hajdu, Stanley Crouch, Tom Harris, Mark Tucker, Steven B. Elworth, Lewis Porter, Bob Mirandon, and Dan Morgenstern have made to this essay, which revises and expands material in the Ellington and Armstrong chapters of my book, *Jammin' at the Margins: Jazz and the American Cinema* (Chicago, 1996). I also thank the members of the Jazz Study Group at Columbia University for many hours of inspirational conversation about jazz and American culture.

1. For the details of the Ellington/Armstrong collaboration in *Paris Blues*, see Klaus Stratemann, *Duke Ellington Day by Day and Film by Film* (Copenhagen, 1992), pp. 429–36 (hereafter abbreviated DEDBD).

2. Originally issued on LP, the music from the session has been on reissued on two compact discs with additional material on *Roulette Jazz 7243 5 24546*. The CD set includes an essay by Dan Morgenstern that touches on the few occasions when Armstrong and Ellington had less productive interactions.

3. For the classical film score, see Irving Bazel on, *Knowing the Score: Notes on Film Music* (New York, 1975); Roy Prendergast, *Film Music: A Neglected Art* (New York, 1977); Hanns Eisler and Theodor Adorno (uncredited), *Composing for the Films* (New York, 1947). The practice of film music is theorized most completely in Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Bloomington, 1987).

4. Otto Preminger, *Preminger: An Autobiography* (Garden City, N.Y., 1977), p. 156.

5. Walter van de Leur, who has exhaustively catalogued the three boxes of music now in the Smithsonian Institution that Ellington and Strayhorn composed for *Anatomy of a Murder*, says that only shards of the music were used in the final print of the film (personal communication, 8 June, 1994).

6. Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies*, pp. 73, 75.

7. David Hajdu, *Lush Life: A Biography of Billy Strayhorn* (New York, 1996).

8. *Ibid.* p. 144.

9. Harold Flender, *Paris Blues* (New York, 1957).

10. Not until 1968 did Sidney Poitier become the first major black star in a Hollywood film to be romantically linked with a white person in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*. For a discussion of the racial dynamic of

Poitier's career, see Thomas Cripps, *Making Movies Black: The Hollywood Message Movie from World War II to the Civil Rights Era* (New York, 1993), pp. 284–94. For the treatment of homosexuals in Hollywood film, see Vito Russo, *The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies* (New York, 1987), which includes as an appendix a "necrology" cataloguing the numerous films in which gay characters die on screen.

11. Sam Shaw, personal communication, August 17, 1994.

12. Shaw quoted in Hajdu, *Lush Life*, p. 207.

13. Mercer Ellington, with Stanley Dance, *Duke Ellington in Person: An Intimate Memoir* (Boston, 1978), p. 183.

14. In *Settling the Score*, Kalinak quotes a contemporary of Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Herbert Stothart: "If an audience is conscious of music where it should be conscious only of drama, then the musician has gone wrong" (99).

15. The oboe solo in the score for *Paris Blues* is played by Harry Smiles, one of nine musicians added to the Ellington orchestra for a recording session held in New York on 1 May, 1961 (DEDBD, p. 434).

16. John Edward Hasse, *Beyond Category: The Life and Genius of Duke Ellington* (New York, 1993), p. 293.

17. Walter van de Leur, personal communication, 8 June, 1994.

18. Sam Shaw, personal communication, 17 August, 1994.

19. Ellington himself frequently rejected the term jazz, largely because it limited his options as a composer. See his many statements on the subject in Mark Tucker, ed., *The Duke Ellington Reader* (New York, 1993), pp. 324–26, 332–38, 364 ff.

20. When George Gershwin met Maurice Ravel in 1928 and asked if he could study with him, Ravel refused, adding, "You might lose your melodic spontaneity and write bad Ravel" (Victor I. Seroff, *Maurice Ravel* [New York: 1953], p. 248, emphasis added). Nevertheless, Ravel shared an enthusiasm for jazz with composers such as Milhaud and Stravinsky, just as Ansermet had expressed delight at a performance of Sidney Bechet as early as 1919. Members of the conservatory, however, such as the fictional René Bernard, were more likely to police the confines of what is and is not "serious art."

21. Tucker, *The Duke Ellington Reader*, pp. 33–40, 57–65, 110–11.

22. Scott De Veaux, *Constructing the Jazz Tradition: Jazz Historiography, Black American Literature Forum* 25 (Fall 1991): 547.

23. Amiri Baraka (as LeRoi Jones), *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (New York, 1963). I name Baraka's book because it was widely read by white intellectuals in the 1960s. Needless to say, a variety of writers, most notably Langston Hughes and Ralph Ellison, made eloquent pleas for understanding jazz outside of a Eurocentric aesthetic many years before Baraka's book appeared.

24. When he was asked in 1935 about Constant Lambert's lavish praise for his music, including the claim that he was in the same league as Ravel and Stravinsky, Ellington responded, "Is that so? Say, that fellow Lambert is quite a writer, isn't he?" When he was praised for the "texture" of his records, Ellington told of transposing a piece to a different key so that it would sound better when recorded by "a goofy mike" with a "loose plunger." After the interviewer read a phrase that compared Ellington's music to "the opalescent subtleties of Debussy," he responded, "Opalescent subtleties. Don't those London fellows push a mean pen?" See Tucker, *The Duke Ellington Reader*, p. 113.

25. Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies*, p. 75.

26. Hajdu, *Lush Life*, p. 210.

27. Caryl Flinn, *Strains of Utopia: Gender, Nostalgia, and Hollywood Film Music* (Princeton, 1992), p. 116.

28. Tynan, *Paris Blues, Down Beat*, November 23, 1961, p. 16.

29. Gabbard, *Jammin' at the Margins*, pp. 177–84.

30. A good example of this routine has been preserved on a CD of a 26 November, 1969 concert in Manchester, England, on Sequel Jazz NED183. Ellington was by no means the only jazz artist to engage in some version of signifying. Jed Rasula has written: "Because Ellington was perceived as debonair, his (much noted) strategies of verbal evasion were regarded as displays of inscrutable charm, where corresponding strategies on the part of other musicians tended to be seen as dissimulation, insolence, capriciousness, or a simple inability to speak standard English (or, as in the case of Lester Young, symptomatic of some alleged mental fatigue). It would be more accurate to see Ellington as the norm rather than the exception here, practicing a strategically contrapuntal speech intended to glance off and otherwise evade the dominant code" (Rasula, *The Media of Memory: The Seductive Menace of Records in Jazz History*, in Krin Gabbard, ed., *Jazz Among the Discourses* [Durham, N.C., 1995], p. 155).

Les Feuilles Mortes by Roger Boyes

Autumn Leaves/Les Feuilles Mortes
(Jacques Prévert – Joseph Kosma – Johnny Mercer)
Columbia New York City 1 October 1957.
7 minutes 12 seconds

*C'est une chanson qui nous ressemble,
Toi tu m'aimais et je t'aimais
Et nous vivions tous deux ensemble,
Toi qui m'aimais, moi qui t'aimais*

*Mais la vie sépare ceux qui s'aiment,
Tout doucement, sans faire de bruit
Et la mer efface sur le sable
Les pas des amants désunis*

The reviewer of a recent Ellington Indigos reissue opined that Ozzie Bailey's chorus sung in French is dispensable. It is not. The next few paragraphs explain why.

A very beautiful piano introduction sets up the melancholy mood of transience and loss which is what Prévert's poem is about. Ozzie Bailey sings the chorus of the poem, supported by *obbligatos* from Ray Nance's violin and Jimmy Woode's bass. In the second chorus the melody moves from the singer to sparsely scored horns, sombre, alongside a continuous weaving embellishment from Ray's violin. In the third chorus the melody remains with the horns as Bailey sings a counter-melody in English (Johnny Mercer's distinguished lyric). The improvised line which Ray weaves on the violin persists, freely, to the end of the concluding coda, at the end of which Billy's piano re-enters. The texture, though a little thicker, is still sparse. Walter van de Leur, who bases his judgments firmly on his study of the manuscript scores, notes: 'Ellington added the trombone chords to the last four bars of the bridge. The rest is Strayhorn's'.

Irving Townsend's original liner note for the recording reads: 'Ray Nance, the string section of the Ellington Orchestra, plays a violin improvisation on another fine standard. Ozzie Bailey sings a soaring second chorus'. This reflects the fact that for the issued LP on which it appeared, *Ellington Indigos*, Columbia committed an act of gross butchery. They decapitated the recording, removing the vocal chorus in French, to leave the central, instrumental chorus, followed by the third, in which Ozzie Bailey sings Mercer's lyric. Worse, in an act of parallel barbarism Columbia also chopped off the English-language third chorus for issue in France, leaving the chorus in French, followed by the instrumental chorus. I suppose it could be argued that, if this truncation was perpetrated by the French (and I hope it wasn't), their response might be excused on the grounds of outraged retaliation to what their American colleagues had done.

It is dispiriting to ponder the mentality which leads to such behaviour. According to Timmer (4th edition, p166) there has even been a *non-vocal* issue, which is still more

grotesque. I hope I never hear it. No wonder Billy Strayhorn was inclined to feel discontented with his lot.

Ellington himself knew there was not the slightest reason to mutilate the score in this way. On 4 March 1958 he performed *Autumn Leaves* at a dance at Mather Air Force Base, a performance which sounds as though it took the musicians by surprise. It differs in a number of details from the studio recording of five months earlier, but it is complete, i.e. introduction followed by three choruses and coda (*check*). In this version Sam Woodyard keeps time throughout, and Harry Carney has a crucial role in the ensemble. If an audience of service personnel at a Californian military base can accept the bi-lingual approach of Billy's score perfectly well, there is no reason at all to shelter the record-buying public from it.

Twelve of the sixteen known Ellington performances of *Autumn Leaves* survive from dance-hall or supper-club venues, all in the USA, many of them military bases like Mather. Most remain unissued and it seems likely that many are amateur recordings made covertly by attenders equipped with portable recorders.

Columbia had already recorded the song on 9 September, three weeks before the *Ellington Indigos* version which they butchered with such apparent relish. This first version remained unissued until a 1995 CD anthology, *Duke Ellington and his Great Vocalists*. They recorded it yet again a year later, at a concert in the Persian Room of the Plaza Hotel, New York. Unsurprisingly, it was one of the tracks they chose not to include on the *Jazz At The Plaza* LP, and as far as I know it remains unissued. The only concert-hall recording is also the only European one. It dates from October 1958, a few weeks after the one from the Plaza, and it was played in the Gaumont State, Kilburn, London (first house). The Oldham conference, Ellington'88, issued a limited edition souvenir double LP of music from this evening, and in 2008 the set was reissued on CD by Ellington'08.

The Gaumont State performance seems a bit edgy and it is interesting to speculate as to why Duke played it at all at this venue. It is the only concert-hall performance among the sixteen we know of. It is a full minute shorter than the *Ellington Indigos* recording, so it is decidedly faster. Bailey's vocal is less pensive, more theatrical, especially in the English-language third chorus (these differences are also in evidence at the Mather AFB performance). The third chorus is notable for his late initial entry and his skilful retrieval of the situation once he's in. To judge from the audience applause, the performance seems to have been received well enough, but the song was not played again in the second house, and no other performance survives from the 1958 European tour. *Autumn Leaves* does not appear to have ever been performed in France. Perhaps this is not too surprising. French audiences could be very vocal in their hostility towards Ellington singers. Duke may well have been exercising sound judgment and caution when he elected not to play *Autumn Leaves* for his French fans.

The sixteen surviving performances of *Autumn Leaves* span the years 1957 to 1972, shortly before Ellington's final

decline into terminal ill-health. For most of its active life it was never shortened, though personnel changes necessitated alterations to the routine. There is no vocal performance from after September 1959, when Ozzie Bailey left the band. It became a solo feature throughout for Ray Nance's violin, in which Harry Carney's role assumed greater importance. After Ray left in 1963 *Autumn Leaves* could no longer be played at all as Billy conceived it, and it became a clarinet feature for Jimmy Hamilton. A 1964 recording in this guise survives from the Bolling Air Force Base in Washington DC. Two early 1968 performances from Fort Meade in Maryland, are also clarinet solos for Jimmy, now reduced from three choruses to two. The only surviving later performance is from a 1972 dance date in Newton Square PA, near Philadelphia. It is a two chorus piano solo by Duke, preceded by the piano introduction (this was always retained).

No post-1958 recording has ever been issued, and on all the versions with Ozzie Bailey he sings on the first and third choruses. I am acquainted only with the *Ellington Indigos*, Mather AFB and Kilburn recordings. I imagine he sings in French as well as in English on all the others; he certainly does on the three I know. I've taken descriptive detail in respect of the recordings I've never heard from the outlines published on page 737 of *New DESOR* (Milan 1999).

Yves Montand's recording of *Les Feuilles Mortes* dates from 1950. It must have still been in wide circulation in Paris in early 1956 when Billy went there to join his former New York partner Aaron Bridgers, who had moved to the city some years earlier. They resumed their relationship with enthusiasm, but by now Aaron had successfully established himself on the local scene (he would stay in Paris for the rest of his life). For Billy the pull of New York (and, no doubt, of Ellington) was strong, and he soon re-crossed the Atlantic to re-engage with the mode of life he had established since throwing in his lot with Duke back in 1939.

Prévert's poem, which Kosma's distinguished melody turned into a song, and which Mercer introduced to the English-speaking world, must have chimed perfectly with Billy's feelings, as he reached his decision to terminate his visit to Paris and his reunion with his companion, in order to resume his life in New York. It requires no effort of imagination at all to visualize him pondering his own version of *Autumn Leaves* as he sat on the plane high above the Atlantic Ocean. It may even be that the flight shaped it: the first, French, chorus looking back towards France; the third, American, chorus reflecting with mixed emotions on the approach to New York; the middle chorus connecting the outer two; the mid-flight calm of Ray Nance's uninterrupted line threading the entire flight with a sustained 'deed-is-done' feeling of reflection touched with melancholy.

How disappointed Billy must have been a year or so later at Columbia's mutilation of his conception on both sides of the Atlantic. You may not like Billy's treatment of *Autumn Leaves* much. If you can't stand Ellington's male singers, and you haven't much enthusiasm for Ray Nance's violin playing either, it is difficult to see how you could like it at all. But whether you like it or not isn't the issue, and neither is price, nor sound fidelity. If you have any care for the integrity of a musical performance, you must shun any

reissue of *Ellington Indigos* which recycles one or other of the mutilated versions which Columbia foisted on the record-buying public back in the late 1950s. Check carefully the track's timing. If it's not 7min.12sec. or thereabouts, avoid it. It cannot be stressed too strongly that no reissue of *Ellington Indigos* which offers anything less than the seven-minute score of this song, as Billy conceived it, should be considered for a moment.

Roger Boyes



Minutes of the DESUK Committee Meeting 1:15pm on Saturday 16th April 2016 at Costa Coffee, New Bridge St, London EC4 at 1:15 pm (The meeting was relocated from the Punch Tavern and postponed for 15 minutes)

Present: Geoff Smith, Chris Addison, Quentin Bryar, Peter Caswell, Mike Coates, Frank Harvey, Antony Pepper

1. Chairman's opening remarks GS said due to uncertainty over the meeting venue he would first address urgent issues, then move to Item 6 (AGM Report) before returning to the Agenda. On The Punch mix up, AP said The Punch told PC that a computer virus had wiped their system. AP had made sure DESUK was booked for July 16. AP said the AGM venue had been confirmed at the Civil Service Club a week earlier. On Matt Cooper's booking put in place by GS at Foyles on June 17, AP said he had no update and said he would enquire about flyers at the event.

6. AGM AP led discussion on roles for committee members. MC volunteered to take the roll of members and would bring DESUK inventory to sell at the meeting. QB offered to help. GS said the wording of the proposed constitutional change as in Blue Light Vol 22/4 would be put to the AGM; it was agreed this would be proposed by AP and seconded by FH. GS said all committee members had agreed to stand for another year except PC. This left a vacancy at Vice Chairman, and MC had agreed to take this on in addition to Membership Secretary; this would be proposed at the AGM. There is a vacancy for one more committee member. PC said he would take over chairmanship of the AGM to call for nomination and conduct a vote. It was felt a reminder email shot about the AGM would not reach sufficient members. The new committee would look at seeking email addresses for all members. AP said a bucket/hat will be put out for people to contribute. The room is booked from noon to 4pm and the meeting would start at 1pm. RB's recital would follow the AGM but not start before 2pm.

GS then returned to 1. Chairman's opening remarks. He said a free CD for members was planned by the end of this year. Other such projects were planned for the future to take advantage of the Society's relative financial strength. Lastly, GS said he was open to committee meetings and AGMs outside London and also promoting out-of-London events.

2. Apologies for Absence Roger Boyes, Ian Bradley, George Duncan and Grant Elliot

3. Minutes of Saturday 23rd Jan meeting were approved, moved by CA and seconded by FH.

4. Matters arising: (a) new leaflet CA has some amendments, and work continues. AP suggested it be circulated by email and taken up at the next committee meeting. (b) CD releases by DESUK – covered under Chairman's opening remarks (c) NY Public Library GE in a written report said he had sent a letter and a copy of BL to Pamela Logan of the Library in February but not received a reply. It was agreed QB should ask GE to send a follow-up letter and that committee members attending the New York Conference should endeavour to make personal contact with Ms Logan. (d) Matt Cooper GS said the Foyles event had been covered and he hoped to have flyers and copies of BL for Foyles ticket holders. Other events included Exeter, St Stephens Church on June 21st or 22nd, and talks continue on a possible recital in Birmingham.

5. Officers Reports (a) Treasurer GE's written report showed it was a very good year thanks to increased subscriptions after the letter to life members and also donations. £1500 was transferred to a reserve account to give a truer picture of the year and a cushion for the future. GS said this was most satisfactory.

(b) BL Editor IB's written report was noted along with RB's emailed addition that posting went without problem and this year's increase in postage costs was immaterial. GS said he agreed with IB's comments regarding records in BL of the society's activities and publicity. (c) Vice Chairman PC noted he had not needed to sub for GS during his term, and said he was ready to conduct voting at the AGM and also help at the New York Conference. (d) Publicity CA said he had an unhelpful reply from Buckingham Palace re his Queen's Suite enquiry and would try again. CA agreed to get a price for official DESUK stationery and report to the next committee meeting. He also gave updates on his graphics and wallchart projects. CA is working with RB on the latter, and PC suggest he consult David Palmquist's TDWAW. (e) Membership MC's written report showed a total of 207 members, but this includes several of unknown status. He said 28 life members had not responded to the letter about paying annually. (f) Meetings/website AP said he agreed next year's AGM should be radically different and discussed at the July committee meeting. Next year AP hoped to seek funding from the Society to further the performance side of the DESUK and would like to see a greater proportion of funds spent on performance. GS said he had asked Mike Fletcher to report on progress with the scores held by the Society; on performance, GS said the Society had spent a fair amount over the past couple of years. AP said he had nothing new to report on the website. In discussion, PC said other websites he had seen had benefited from a redesign and commended www.sandybrownjazz.co.uk/ CA said he had offered to help but lacked skills; AP said the DESUK site benefited from being small and easily navigable.

6. AGM Covered above

7. Annual Cycle of Committee Meetings RB's email request that there should an agenda item at the June/July pre-summer break committee meeting to set a cycle of meetings for 2016/17 was noted and agreed.

8. New York Conference Members going to the conference will bring DESUK items, and MC will provide a list of overseas members who have not paid and membership forms. GS said the gavel is on its way.

9. Standing Agenda Item Constitutional Change – covered in item 6. **AGM**

10. "Dear All" emails GS requested that a subject that involves criticism or debate it should be brought up at a committee meeting and not via email.

11. AOB QB raised some emails received which were discussed. It was agreed QB should write to Michael Kilpatrick to congratulate him on news that his score of *Such Sweet Thunder* is to be used in a Prom concert this year.

There being no other business, GS declared the meeting closed at 3:35pm

Quentin Bryar 16th April 2016

