

Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society
January 23, 2000
DUKE ELLINGTON: MUSIC OF THE SOUL
led by Doleta Chapru and Warren Hagstrom

1926 *Birmingham Breakdown*, a fast, unrestrained dance. Duke Ellington

Michael Briggs, Piano

"David ... danced before the Lord with all his might, while he and the entire house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of trumpets." Samuel II, 16:14.

Duke Ellington's justification for dancing in church.

Welcome to Prairie UU Society
Chalice Lighting and Meditation

Nancy Schraufnagel

"I believe that no matter how highly skilled a drummer or saxophonist might be, if this is the thing he does best, and he offers it sincerely from the heart in - or as accompaniment to - his worship, he will not be unacceptable because of lack of skill or of the instrument upon which he makes his demonstration, be it pipe or tomtom." Ellington

Offering for the Wetherby Fund

Joys and Sorrows (As a courtesy to our many performers, please be brief.)

Children's Story: *A Soda Jerk at the Poodle Dog Cafe*

1941 *Take the 'A' Train* (Ellington's Theme Song) Billy Strayhorn

Prairie Children, Congregation, The Pipe and Tomtom Band

Legend has it that when Ellington invited young composer-arranger Billy Strayhorn to play for him, Strayhorn composed 'A' Train from Ellington's directions to Harlem.

WASHINGTON DC AND NEW YORK 1915-1927

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HARLEM AND THE COTTON CLUB 1927-1931

1927 *Black and Tan Fantasy*

Ellington and Miley

Susan Hagstrom, piano

Black and tans were night clubs patronized by both black and white clientele. *Black and Tan Fantasy* has elements of a spiritual, composed church music and a touch of Chopin.

1931 *Mood Indigo*

Ellington and Mills

vocal: Metje Butler, Mary Mullen, Paula Pachciarz, Kate Skog; piano: Carl Wacker; "band": Rick Owens, Ian Park, Brian Glueck; dancer: Tara Converse

Ellington wrote the musical score to *Mood Indigo* in 15 minutes. His band recorded it the next day and broadcast it that night from the Cotton Club.

1932 *It Don't Mean and Thing if it Ain't Got That Swing* Ellington and Mills

Judy Wacker, viola; Carl Wacker, piano; Kate Skog, drum

Anne Urbanski, vocal; Michael Briggs, piano

Ellington's musicians supposedly lost their dance beat after a tour playing only theatres. Mills claimed *It Don't Mean a Thing* originated with his comments to the band. The composition, emphasizing beats two and four, popularized the word "swing." Fondly labeled "jungle music" by Cotton Club members, Ellington's syncopated rhythms were considered primitive, barbaric and sinful by more conservative folks.

1933 *Sophisticated Lady* Ellington, Mills, Parish

Warren Hagstrom, vocal; Doleta Chapru, piano

"Sophisticated Lady" was frequently requested, even in later years when Ellington's focus shifted to new, lengthier compositions.

BUSINESS ARRANGEMENT WITH IRVING MILLS 1926-1939

1934 *Solitude* Ellington, Mills, De Lange

Jennifer Parker, piano

Ellington arrived in a recording studio with three numbers ready and a fourth needed. The band ahead of his went overtime. "So, standing up, leaning against the studio's glass enclosure, I wrote the score of *Solitude* in twenty minutes. After we played and recorded it the first time I noted that everybody in the studio was moved emotionally. Even the engineer had a tear in his eye."

1935 *In a Sentimental Mood* Ellington, Mills, Kurtz

Kay Frazier, vocal; Doleta Chapru, piano

At a party in Durham, NC, Ellington ran in to two women friends who were sparring over a man. "So I sat the girls one on each side of me, played piano as a sort of peacemaker, and dedicated a new song to them. They loved it, hummed it together, and for a moment everything was all right. Later it was titled *In a Sentimental Mood*."

1938 *Prelude to a Kiss* Ellington, Gordon, Mills

Rosemarie Lester, vocal; Doleta Chapru, piano

Around the time he composed *Prelude to a Kiss* Ellington left Mildred Dixon for Cotton Club showgirl Evie Ellis who became his lifetime partner. He also split with Irving Mills, started his own publishing company, began collaborating with Billy Strayhorn and stopped drinking. All this helped him regain his spirit after the devastating loss of his mother in 1935.

THE WAR YEARS

- 1941 *I Got It Bad and That Ain't Good* Ellington and Webster
Recorder Ensemble: Doleta Chapru, Gary Georgi, Warren Hagstrom,
Rosemarie Lester, Mary Nason, Al Nettleton, Paula Pachciarz
- Originally the theme of *Concerto for Cootie*, written for trumpeter
Cootie Williams. Later sung in the musical revue, *Jump for Joy*,
created by multiple writers to counter stereotypes of American blacks.
- 1942 *Don't Get Around Much Any More* Ellington and Russell
Kate Skog, vocal; Doleta Chapru, piano
- 1943 *Do Nothin' till You Hear From Me* Ellington and Russell
Barbara Park, vocal; Linda Sheehy, piano
- 1944 *I'm Beginning to See the Light* Ellington, George, Hodges, James
Congregation; Aileen Nettleton, piano
- 1945 *I'm Just a Lucky So-And-So* Ellington and David
Dark of the Moon Band: Bonnie Gruber, Ingrid Lind-John, Mary Mullen

SATIN DOLL, NEWPORT JAZZ AND SWINGING FOR THE LORD

- 1953 *Satin Doll* Ellington, Strayhorn, Mercer
Prairie Men accompanied by Carl Wacker
- Satin Doll* helped boost Ellington's popularity just as swing was losing
out to rhythm and blues and rock and roll. By the time *Satin Doll* was
written Ellington and 'A' Train composer Strayhorn had collaborated
fifteen years. Because Strayhorn was gay, he might have remained on
the fringes of the jazz world without Ellington's support. To
Ellington, he was like a second son. "Billy Strayhorn was my right
arm, my left arm, all the eyes in the back of my head, my brainwaves
in his head, and his in mine."
- 1943 *Come Sunday* Ellington
Prairie Choir: Barbara Park, director; Bob Park, Warren Hagstrom,
Rick Owens, Ian Park, Brian Glueck, Rosemarie Lester, Aileen
Nettleton, Mary Mullen, Rachel Siegfried, Paula Pachciarz, Metje
Butler, Kay Frazier, Kate Skog; Doleta Chapru, piano
- Come Sunday*, from a larger work, *Black, Brown and Beige*, is the
song of Boola, an African slave, who teaches himself to read the
Bible. Boola and his friends gather secretly outdoors on Sunday
morning. Ellington later used *Come Sunday* in his first Concert of
Sacred Music. It has since been performed in many church settings
and appears in our U.U. hymnbook.

1973 *Wordless Prayer*

Roscoe Gill, Jr.

Prairie Choir

Ellington included singer Roscoe Gill's *Wordless Prayer* in his third Concert of Sacred Music. Ellington's own wordless vocalise, T.G.T.T (Too Good To Title) was performed in the second Sacred Concert. Both composers experimented with unexpected harmonies and intervals that may sound like wrong notes to the first-time listener. Ellington said he liked to think Jesus Christ "violated conformity" in the same way.

1959 *A Single Petal of a Rose*

Ellington

Carl Wacker, piano

Ellington often played this piece in solo performances during the last 15 years of his life. He wrote it as part of an extended orchestral work, *The Queen's Suite*, dedicated to Queen Elizabeth II. Ellington recorded the suite at his own expense and had a single disc sent to Buckingham Palace. The recording was made public after his death.

Introduction of Visitors and Prairie Announcements

1941 *Take the 'A' Train* (Reprise)

Strayhorn

DANCE WITH THE DUKE !!!

