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INTERVIEWS WITH DUKE ELLINGTON. 1956 AND 1964

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CONTENTS REEL-BY-REEL

Reels 1. 2. Las Vegas. 1956 3.75 ips -- research for TIME cover story.

Early years: high school, art talent, sign shop.

First band -- violin, cello, drums, piano. Sonny Greer.

Party band business.

Enter Hardwick, Whetsol, Snowden.

First NYC trip -- Wilbur Sweatman. Return to Washington.

Waller offers NYC job, return to NYC. Scuffling.

Playing for tips. Bricktop and Barron's. Tips, Kentucky Club.  
5 pieces.

1927 to Cotton Club -- big band -- 11 pieces.

Writing music for his players; he found men who can't read, or who had  
other limitations particularly creative.

Las Vegas and sex -- mystery of the desert.

1937, band plays with symphony

1949 "New World a-Comin'"

1950 "Night Creature," "Harlem."

Duke doesn't "know" symphony orchestra. Writes six-line scores for  
Luther Henderson to fill out.

Amateur playwriting for fun.

"Jump for Joy."

He always composing - in cars, busses, hotels

Race issues, black contribution to music, segregated audiences.

Explains "Black, Brown & Beige," blues.

God.

Jazz is frivolous -- "I write myself."

Explains licks.

There is nothing new in music.

Bebop.

Group composition.

Teaching new arrangements to band players by rote.

[He plays piano.]

Jazz is folk music. East coast favors string (including piano) music.

Piano players.

His Washington dance bands mostly strings (plucked and strummed).

His mother, father.

Dislikes rules of music.

"Soda Fountain Rag [plays].

Mrs. Clinkscale.

[Plays his unknown (?) songs].

Reel 2. 1964. In car. NYC to Washington and (next day) to Chicago.  
(1-7/8 ips)

Geography of Washington.

Separate schools & black indoctrination.

Negro is a hybrid, like jazz.

Jazz parallels the culture.

Psychoanalysis equivalent to confession.

Ragtime, pre-ragtime, Earl Hines.

There are no new notes.

Harlem. Battles of swing. Fletcher Henderson. Swapping arrangements  
with white bands (Goldkette).

Bop is simply bi-tonality, not for singing.

Improvisation must be prepared.

Swing is a verb.

Music is dance-related.

People imitate animals.

Reel 3. 1964. en route Washington to Chicago.

Wants to write Episcopal Mass.

It's easier to write a new number than to transcribe old one for band.

Fickle about music.

A story: shy woman becomes tiger.

The types of love.

Sweden.

"Chocolate Kiddies."

Rise of Negroes, but lies in papers. All about economics.

Quick life chronology: Washington, NYC, Barrons, Kentucky Club, Irving  
Mills, Cotton Club.

Harlem style, "Ziegfeld Showgirl," "Amos & Andy" (film), songs by  
years, Alice Babs, "Timon of Athens," Newport 1956.

Memories of Harlem.

Desegregating the Hurricane.

Battles of Swing at the Savoy -- Chick Webb; Oliver vs. Henderson;

Hawkins vs Bechet, Lion vs anybody.

Same reel, Sheraton Hotel, Chicago, May 31 1964.

Tuba night at the Savoy.

Language; "hip."

Drinking contests.

Anecdote -- Nanton, Stepin Fetchit.



Kicking drink.

Sex in 1930s Paris.

Bandmen as ambassadors.

Reel 4. July 22, 1964. Atlantic City.

Story about composing. "Caravan." Making "Drum is a Woman."  
Other details and advice.

Romantic story about boy with clarinet.

Technique vs. taste.

The band business, for him, it's The Joy Kick.

Dancing audiences become listening audience.

Trains.

Entourage.

Strayhorn's arrival, 1938.

The jazz era.

The shout.

Story about a chick.

Fiddlers and dancers.

Bechet.

The 1927 band; Chas. Schribman.

Got Django Rinehardt in band ("I wanted to hear him"). Also Bechet.

Tatum.

Reel 5. 1964. Atlantic City. (with Strayhorn, Dance).

Men in the band: Irvis, Nanton, Miley, Cootie, Whetsol, Carney,

Bigard, Tisol, Hodges, Braud, Edwards, Jenkins, Guy, Brown,  
Stewart, Ivie, Strayhorn (stories).

Life on Pullmans. Vs later travel arrangements.

Blanton, Taylor, Webster, Nance, Strayhorn & ASCAP ban, Jeffries.

More "Jump for Joy."

1941 -- losing men to war.

Joya Sherill & her mother.

1943 -- Carnegie Hall concert and extended works.

Story about big royalty check.

Sinatra, Hibbler, Roche.

Traveling stories about Rex, Brown, Gonzalves, Woodyard, Procope.

Sex in Paris.

Carney.

The New Yorker type.

USA land of opportunity.

Reel 6. Aug. 11, 1964, Freedomland (theme park).

Must know rules to break them.

Today's "ignorant music."

Will Marion Cook, Vodery.

Eastman School workshop.

James P. Johnson & composing notes to fit under fingers.

Duke's subtle insurance -- 2 drummers story.

Mutiny in band (Hodges).

Louis Bellson.

The Phone. Love. Fiddler vs. Dancer. Social pleasures.

Composing with Strayhorn via phone.

Hates categories.

Same reel, Oct 13, 1964 Algiers Motel, Redwood City, CA.

Born in Newport, 1956. The story.

On radio, 1928.

Arrangers, bass playing is the foundation.

His early piano studies.

F-sharp is not G-flat.

Composing, set limits by limitations of band players, trying to write  
in pop language. Some songs just happened ("Mood Indigo").

Reel 7. Redwood City (with Strayhorn).

What do you do if you don't do what you want to do?

I never leave music. I please the palate of my ear.

The word jazz.

Rock.

Jazz from the land of freedom. Vulgar word. A-B-Cs of listening.

Black stick (poem).

Jazzman fantasy.

Race responsibility.

How to write the autobiography.

I don't resist fate.

The Palace story.

Problems with flowery announcements.

Harlem had its own sound.

Swapping arrangements with white bands -- example of integration.

Jazz's outlaw reputation. African foundations.

Language: "dig."

Jazz = musical illiteracy. Jazzplayer = outlaw in music.

Making it at Barron's in 1920s.

The NY look.

Radio remotes.

Image of jazzman.

"Jump for Joy" & Uncle Tom.

More memories of early days.

Teenage job in Atlantic City as dishwasher; first gig.

Fragment from Reel 1 (end).

Talk of retiring, assigning his seductions to others.

Female characteristics.

Reel 8. Nov. 2, 1964. Redwood City.

Answers to CH questions, attempting to steer subject matter.

Early recollections.

Many loves.

Women the hunters.

Sex contests around reservoir.

Disapproval of music subsidies.

His father.

Hung-up on audiences -- How to play to please people.

Bad pianos.

Study of people.

Good girls and bad.

Study of women.

Story of philandering husband.

More chronology 1923. 1927,

The Circuit.

1933 England, Paris.

1939 Sweden.

1931 Mood Indigo.

1936 Boy Meets Horn.

1939 Solitude.



More Pullman story.

1939 Never No Lament.

1940 I Got It Band and That Ain't Good.

1943 Black Brown and Beige.

1944 New World a-Comin'.

1945 Joya Sherill.

Suites: Perfume, Deep South, Liberian.

Beggars' Holiday.

1943-4 Hurricane, Zanzibar, 400 Club.

1951 Thunderbird.

1955 Aquashow. "The Man With Four Sides."

1956 Newport. New Haven symphony & lost pants. Hodges returns.

Woodyard.

Interview with local reporter.

Music with the most complaints stands best chance.

Broadening the scope of the American ear.

How he started group composing. -- Nanton's limitations.

Same reel, en route to Los Gatos, CA.

Can't retain what he's written -- perspective changes every day.

The Twist.

Interview with Ruth Stamatiou (his sister).

Talking race with Iranians.

[end catalogue]