

THE DUKE ELLINGTON CENTER FOR THE ARTS,
LA MAISON DU DUKE
AND PROVINS DUKE FESTIVAL
PRÉSENT

40 ans

Duke Ellington's heritage (1899-1974)

DUKE ELLINGTON SACRED CONCERT

October 1st 2014
Paris, Church La Madeleine

80 ARTISTS ON STAGE

Laurent Mignard Duke Orchestra

Mercedes Ellington

Emmanuel Pi Djob

Nicolle Rochelle

Sylvia Howard

Fabien Ruiz

Choeurs

Les voix en mouvement,
dir. Michel Podolak



DUKE ELLINGTON SACRED CONCERT



Duke's testament

"Now I can say openly what I have been saying to myself on my knees" - Duke Ellington

Duke Ellington's work represents one of the greatest legacies of the 20th century. Considering his life as "being blessed by God", he composed and offered in testament three sacred concerts in oratorio form.

For 10 years, Laurent Mignard and his Duke Orchestra distinguished itself for his loyalty to the works of the maestro, especially his "Sacred Concerts" in the church of Saint- Sulpice, Cork and "Jazz à Vienne" festival. Unified in the same fervor, the audience discovered a major and poignant work.

To celebrate the 40th anniversary legacy of Duke Ellington (1899-1974), the "Duke Ellington Center for the Arts" wishes to spread the word of peace, love and spirituality in a tour event uniting the French cathedrals, launched in Paris (Church of La Madeleine – October 1st 2014) with

- Laurent Mignard Duke Orchestra – 16 musicians
- Mercedes Ellington (Duke's granddaughter) as narrator
- Emmanuel Pi Djob (revelation "the Voice 2013")
- International vocalists Nicolle Rochelle and Sylvia Howard
- tap dancer Fabien Ruiz
- a mass choir.

A brilliant moment of spirituality for all audiences.



Video : <http://laurent-mignard.com/index.php?id=154>

DUKE ELLINGTON SACRED CONCERT



More than 80 artists on stage

Guest soloists

Narrator	Mercedes Ellington
Vocalists	Emmanuel Pi Djob, Nicolle Rochelle, Sylvia Howard
Tap Dance	Fabien Ruiz

Laurent Mignard Duke Orchestra

Sax / clarinets	Didier Desbois, Aurélie Tropez, Olivier Defaÿs, Carl Schlosser, Philippe Chagne
Trompets	Claude Egea, Sylvain Gontard, Jérôme Etcheberry, Richard Blanchet
Trombones	Fidel Fourneyron, Michaël Ballue, Jerry Edwards
Piano	Philippe Milanta
Bass	Bruno Rousselet
Drums	Julie Saury
Bandleader	Laurent Mignard

Chorists

Professional Choir	Les voix en mouvement, dir. Michel Podolak
Choir	Gospel Attitude, dir. Jacky Weber
Choir	White Spirit, dir. Magali Lange
Choir	La Celle Saint-Cloud, dir. Bruno Bourrier

PROGRAM



PRAISE GOD

Barytone sax solo / Orchestra

SUPREME BEING

Choir / Orchestra

SOMETHING 'BOUT BELIEVING

Sylvia Howard / Choir / Soloists / Orchestra

IN THE BEGINNING GOD

Emmanuel Pi Djob / Choir / Orchestra

ALMIGHTY GOD ... has those angels

Nicolle Rochelle / Choir / Soloists / Orchestra

ALMIGHTY GOD

Choeur Voix en Mouvement / Bass solo

***Unreleased** - Source archives Smithsonian Institution*

THE SHEPHERD

Trumpet solo / Orchestra

TELL ME IT'S THE TRUTH

Sylvia Howard / Orchestra

COME SUNDAY

Sylvia Howard / Orchestra

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Emmanuel Pi Djob (Sylvia Howard) / Orchestra

HEAVEN

Nicolle Rochelle / Orchestra

IT'S FREEDOM

Mercedes Ellington / Choir / Soloists / Orchestra

MEDITATION

Piano solo

DAVID DANCED BEFORE THE LORD

Fabien Ruiz / / Choir / Soloists / Orchestra

IS GOD A THREE LETTER WORD FOR LOVE

Nicolle Rochelle / Choir / Orchestra

AIN'T BUT THE ONE

Emmanuel Djob (Sylvia Howard) / Choir / Orchestra

FATHER FORGIVE

Mercedes Ellington / Choir a capella

PRAISE GOD AND DANCE

Nicolle Rochelle / Choir / Soloists / Orchestra

Audio : <http://www.laurent-mignard.com/index.php?id=149>



Exceptionnall venues

Launch – October 1st 2014

Paris Church La Madeleine

Tour june 2015

Rennes	Cathedral Saint Pierre
Saint-Brieuc	Cathedral Saint-Etienne
Bayeux	Cathedral Notre-Dame
Beauvais	Cathedral Saint-Pierre
Lille	Cathedral Notre Dame de la Treille
Orléans	Cathedral Sainte-Croix
Dijon	Cathedral Saint-Bénigne
Lyon	Basilique de Fourvière
Aix en Provence	Cathedral Saint-Sauveur
Nîmes	Church Sainte-Perpetue
Toulouse	Cathedral Saint-Etienne



In progress : Reims, Rouen, Nantes, Bordeaux, Limoges, Chartres, Poitiers, La Rochelle, Strasbourg ...



DUKE ELLINGTON SACRED CONCERT

with Laurent Mignard Duke Orchestra, Mercedes Ellington et invités

Chruch of la Madeleine

Wenesday 1st of october 2014 – 9pm

- Quarantine of Duke Ellington's legacy
- Mercedes Ellington in France, to spread the work and the values of the greatest US composer.
- A strong meaning work for the world of today
- A network of french cathedrals (Opening in Paris on October 10th)
- Laurent Mignard Duke Orchestra, the big band that America envies
- Outstanding soloists for the first time together
- More than 80 artists on stage
- An unreleased work of Duke Ellington during the show

DUKE ELLINGTON



A commitment at heart of spirituality

"In 1965, I was Invited by Dean C.J.Bartlett and the Reverend John S.Yaryan to present a concert of sacred music in Grace Cathedral, San Francisco. I recognized this as an exceptional opportunity and said *"Now I can say openly what I have been saying to myself on my knees"*.

I consider these concerts of sacred music as the most important thing I ever did. Of all my travels from one place to another, receiving praise, applause and handshakes, and thereby doing what I loved to do, I appreciate deeply my luck because I know that God has blessed my path. Thank you my God.



Every time a child of God got rid of his fears in search of honesty – trying to communicate, whether being understood or not - miracles happened.

We must look after this earth if we all believe in the absolute meaning of the word : LOVE."

There a some people who speak many languages. Every man prays in his own language, and there is no language that God doesn't understand.

Duke Ellington.



Mercedes Ellington



The keeper of the flame

Mercedes Ellington is a professional choreographer, director, producer and a "composer of dances and situations." She is also a consultant, historian and spokesperson for the legacy and heritage of Duke Ellington, her grandfather, as well as Mercer Ellington, her father.

President of the Board of the Duke Ellington Center for the Arts, she is a graduate of the Julliard School of Music, an honorary citizen of Paris, and in 2007 was awarded the prestigious Paul Robeson Award by Actors' Equity Association.

Mercedes was the first woman of color to dance with the June Taylor Company on the "Jackie Gleason Show," for a decade.

Subsequently, she transitioned into full time choreography and artistic direction via BalleTap, USA aka DancEllington, Inc., a theatrical tap dance company, which she co-founded with Maurice Hines.

Mercedes choreographed The Harlem Gospel Singer's European Happiness Tour, and Queen Esther Marrow's Walk Tall Gospel Tour and In Mahalia's Light, starring Queen Esther Marrow at The Passage Theater in Trenton, New Jersey.



Emmanuel Pi Djob



[Video](#)

An inspired and inspiring preacher

Emmanuel Pi Djob dazzled the jury of "The Voice / France" in 2013 with his baritone voice forged on the fire of the Afro-American gospel. His deep commitments are as a quest between the sacred and the layman, between dusts of streets and incense of the churches, between the shouts, the singing but also the silence ... Emmanuel Pi Djob is an artist who claims to be radical in his art: "*The Gospel it is to look for the deepest voice which pushes the body very far. It is to let God affect us. That commits the life.*"

Nicolle Rochelle



[Video](#)

An incredible voice in the temperament of fire

Nicolle began in TV shows at the age of 8, beside Ringo Starr. Then she played in the "Cosby Show", studied singing, dancing and the tap-dancing, made her debuts for the cinema in "The Tales of the black night" and joined "Fame" to Broadway. Specialist of Josephine Baker, she radiates the public of the Casino de Paris in the musical "In search of Joséphine" (Jérôme Savary). Unanimously estimated for her extraordinary vocal and choreographic capacities, Nicolle Rochelle is a ray of sunshine which illuminates the stage with her great talent and her happy face attitude.



Sylvia Howard



The great blues priestess

Sylvia Howard belongs to these singers who bewitch by her charisma, from the first note, the first look. She joins in the lineage of these American black singers fallen in the pot of gospel before landing in jazz. Far from being crushed by her models (Sarah, Billie or Dinah), Sylvia Howard is a warm artist who asserts a real personality and explore the emotion with a wonderful feeling.

Fabien Ruiz



The inescapable tap dancer

With more than 1.500 shows in France and worldwide, Fabien Ruiz is an internationally famous tap dancer. Real percussionist, his musicality and his sense of improvisation allow him to play in the most varied artistic domains, on the greatest stages and TV shows. Teacher and choreographer, he coached Jean Dujardin for the 5 Oscar's movie "The Artist".

LAURENT MIGNARD



The ambassador



Bandleader, composer, arranger and trumpeter, Laurent Mignard followed a varied musical training before studying closely most most styles of jazz.

As a composer, he is passionate about Claude Debussy, Henri Dutilleux, Toru Takemitsu and Duke Ellington, seeking the balance between serenity and surprise. From his first album (Face à Face 1998), he innovates by putting together a jazz trio and a cello quartet.

In 2002, he founded his Pocket Quartet (three albums: Suites, Alter Tropicus , Good News) with whom he was praised “Jazz Revelation” at Juan les Pins Festival 2005.

Laurent Mignard founded and conducts the Duke Orchestra in 2003, recognized as the best Ellingtonian orchestra in activity - according to Duke Ellington Music Society - on the biggest stages : Jazz à Vienne festival, Beirut, Cork, Saint-Sulpice, Radio France, Beijing Opera, Shanghai Spring Festival ...

The first album “Duke Ellington is alive” received the “Grand Prix 2009” from the “Hot Club of France”. In 2012, Laurent Mignard signs with “Juste Une trace” on the prestigious label Columbia / Sony Music and released two new albums acclaimed by the press and specialists, "Ellington French Touch" and "Battle Royal."

Aiming to broaden the audience, Laurent Mignard conceived the “Train du Jazz”, initiated la Maison du Duke (Duke’s place in Paris) and founded the Provins Duke Festival.

Laurent Mignard DUKE ORCHESTRA



The reference orchestra

Recognized as the best European ambassador of the work of Duke Ellington, Laurent Mignard Duke Orchestra is acclaimed by specialists (Duke Ellington Society), musicians and major festivals. The commitment is faithful, respectful, creative, and resolutely turned towards a large enthusiastic audience : Jazz à Vienne festival, Beirut, Cork, Peking Opera, Sanghai festival, Saint-Sulpice, L'Européen, Le Palace, L'Alhambra, Jazz sous les Pommiers, Radio France, TF1, France 2, France 3, Mezzo, France Inter, France Musique, FIP, Europe 1, RFI, TSF Jazz ...



[video concert TF1](#)

[video Le Palace](#)

« Jubilating » - **Jazz Magazine**

« The spirit of Ellington in a contemporary body » - **Telerama**

« If you If you want to hear Ellington live, go to Paris ! »

Duke Ellington Music Society

Line-up : Didier Desbois (as,cl), Aurélie Tropez (as,cl), Fred Couderc (ts,cl,fl), Carl Schlosser (ts,fl), Philippe Chagne (bs), Claude Egea (tp), Sylvain Gontard (tp), Jérôme Etcheberry (tp), Richard Blanchet (tp), Fidel Fourneyron (tb), Michaël Ballue (tb), Jerry Edwards (tb), Philippe Milanta (p), Bruno Rousselet (b), Julie Saury (dms), Laurent Mignard (dir).

Albums

ELLINGTON FRENCH TOUCH

Juste une Trace / Columbia – Sony Music 2012

Album of the year Jazzmag/Jazzman

BATTLE ROYAL

Juste une Trace / Columbia – Sony Music 2012

DUKE ELLINGTON IS ALIVE

Juste une Trace 2009

Grand prix du Hot Club de France

DUKE ELLINGTON CENTER FOR THE ARTS



Duke Ellington understood that music had the power to unify, empower, enlighten and heal. Founded by Duke's granddaughter, Mercedes Ellington, the mission of the Duke Ellington Center for the Arts is to further Duke Ellington's creative legacy and his philosophy of human harmony "beyond category."

The Center creates performances marrying Ellington's music with other art forms, especially dance and theater; and sponsors a variety of educational initiatives, including scholarships, seminars, panels, screenings and other outreach.

The prize "Beyond Category" associated with an award, for distinguished artists who embody the philosophy of Ellington excellence (the first winner being the dancer, choreographer Donald Saddler and the company Jacob's Pillow).

The Centre also contributes to educational initiatives, including "Jazz Drama" at Lincoln Center program, encouraging women to enter the world of jazz, the "Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band" contest or support the discovery performances by youth.

Alfie Wade



International representative of DECFA, Alfred (Alfie) Wade Jr, as a longtime resident of Harlem founded his company, "Odyssey 21st Century Communications," before moving to Sète, France in 2003. His professional skills include Public Relations, Marketing, Audience Development, Event Management, the Cultural Arts, and Social Cohesion. He is strongly committed to the creation of an International "Duke Ellington Foundation" to unite Ellingtonians and uphold the values of the Maestro.

Le sacré selon Ellington renaît à Saint-Sulpice



Première réussite, le choix des thèmes. Du corpus d'une trentaine de compositions des trois Sacred Concerts, Mignard en a gardé une bonne dizaine. Essentiellement des deux premiers concerts. Les plus lumineuses, celles ou les allers-retours entre le gospel, le blues et le jazz semblent des évidences. De la section de vents Mignard n'a que la trompette et le saxophone (Philippe Chagne). Qu'à cela ne tienne, sa science de l'arrangement permet une évocation très sûre de la machinerie ellingtonienne. La troisième, c'est l'utilisation vocale sur le répertoire des Sacred Concerts. Enjouée où il faut, recueillie au bon moment. On aurait été comblé si par un rien de relâchement avait été rappelé que ces années 1960 et le début des années 1970 étaient dans le jazz aussi celles d'une affirmation mystique, pour ne pas dire chez certains un rien perchée dans le cosmique. Quand bien même Ellington avait-il abordé avec sérieux ces compositions, témoignages de son rapport à la spiritualité.

The Sacred according to Ellington reborns in Saint-Sulpice

First success, the choice of themes. The corpus in Trenta compositions of the three Sacred Concerts, Mignard has kept a dozen. Essentially the first two concerts. The brighter ones or those roundtrips between gospel, blues and Jazz seemed obvious. The wind section Mignard did the trumpet and saxophone (Philippe Chagne).). As to that his knowledge of the arrangement allows a very safe evocation of Ellington machinery. The third is the use of voice on the directory of Sacred Concerts. Playful where it is necessary, collected at the right time. It would have been filled by if no release was recalled that the 1960s and early 1970s were in jazz as those of a mystical affirmation, not to say in some way perched in a cosmic thing. Ellington even had he seriously discussed these compositions, are testimonies of his relation to spirituality.



14 mai 2014, par Michel Contat

Laurent Mignard Duke Quintet, Emmanuel Djob, Nicole Rochelle

Vénérant Duke Ellington et faisant vivre sa musique orchestrale, Laurent Mignard innove par ses arrangements pour big band, pour quintet et même pour trio. Le festival Jazz à Saint-Germain-des-Prés innove aussi en présentant une formation de jazz dans la vénérable église de Saint-Sulpice, connue pour abriter de très belles fresques de Delacroix, et plus encore, pour servir de cadre au best-seller mondial Da Vinci Code, de Dan Brown. C'est en quintet avec le chœur By The Gospel River que le « Duke français » va donner sa mesure.

Laurent Mignard Duke Quintet, Emmanuel Djob, Nicole Rochelle

Venerating Duke Ellington by playing live his orchestral music, Laurent Mignard innovates in arrangements for quintet and even trio. Jazz festival in Saint-Germain-des-Prés also innovates by presenting a jazz combo in the venerable church of Saint-Sulpice, known for hosting some beautiful frescoes by Delacroix, and more, to provide a framework for best World-seller the Da Vinci Code, Dan Brown. With his quintet, joined by the "By The Gospel River" choir, the "French Duke" will give his measurement.

Let ²⁵/₁₀ ²⁵ the spirit move you

A cathedral is an apt venue for Duke Ellington's Sacred Concerts, writes Paul Dromey

FEATURING the world-famous Laurent Mignard Dukish Orchestra from Paris, with full choir and soloists, the magnificent music of Duke Ellington's Sacred Concerts will be recreated at St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork, on the afternoon of Sunday October 30, as part of this year's Cork Jazz Festival programme for Cork Capital of Culture 2005.

Apart from his reputation as a bon vivant, Ellington was a deeply religious man.

"Now I can say openly what I have been saying to myself on my knees," Duke once said, describing the first Sacred Concert as the most important work of his life, when he accepted the invitation to present his music for the first time at an event celebrating the consecration of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco in 1965.

His three Sacred Concerts (written in 1965, 1968 and 1973), allowed Ellington to crossover in-to liturgical music, blending swing, blues, gospel, oratorio, "grande musique" and African music.

In 2002, at a festival in Paris, Ellington's great project was recreated by Laurent Mignard in Saint Sulpice, a church in which Duke performed in 1969.



Former EU parliament president Pat Cox, narrating the Duke Ellington 'Sacred Concert' Show at St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork, as part of the Guinness Jazz Festival. Picture: Larry Cummins



Vocalist Sylvia Howard of the Laurent Mignard Orchestra, supported by the Vocal Spirit Choir and Voices of Cork Choir at St Fin Barre's.

Picture: Larry Cummins

Pat makes a holy show of himself

By VINCENT KELLY

vincent.kelly@eecho.ie

FORMER president of the EU Parliament Pat Cox got all jazzed up for a once-in-a-lifetime performance yesterday. He narrated and also had a singing role in one of the most famous jazz works of the modern era, the late Duke Ellington's *Sacred Concert*, staged at St Fin Barre's Cathedral as the Church of Ireland's cultural contribution to Cork's European Capital of Culture programme. The two-hour long event, whose sponsors included the *Evening Echo* and the *Irish Examiner*, featured sax, clarinet, trumpets, trombones, piano, double bass and drums. The 30-strong Voices of Cork choir, directed by Pdraig Wallace also made an outstanding contribution to the success of the show, directed by one of France's best-known band leaders, composer, arranger and trumpet player, Laurent Mignard and featuring his band, the Dukish Orchestra, named in honour of Duke Ellington. The band was joined by American vocalist

Sylvia Howard. Her artistry won the biggest ovation of the afternoon. One minute it was the sound of a full swing band which filled the sacred venue, the next it was that of instrumental soloists, solo piano, the choir or solo vocalist. Mr Mignard paid special tribute to Bernard Casey, formerly head of the wind and percussion department at Cork School of Music and the rest of the Cork Jazz Festival Committee for their special contribution to organising the event. Cllr Jerry Buttimer, deputising for the Lord Mayor, praised former Harbour Commissioner member Bill Hosford for coming up with the idea and the rest of the Church of Ireland community for backing him on a project which, he said, was undoubtedly one of the highlights of 2005.



THE INTERNATIONAL
DEMS BULLETIN

DUKE ELLINGTON MUSIC SOCIETY
12/1 April - July 2012
Our 34th Year of Publication

FOUNDER: BENNY AASLAND
HONORARY MEMBER: FATHER JOHN GARCIA GENSEL
EDITOR: SJEF HOEFSMIT
ASSISTED BY: ROGER BOYES



DUKE ELLINGTON MUSIC SOCIETY

April 2012

Laurent Mignard's latest CD, recorded on 27Dec11 at the Auditorium Henri Dutilleux in Clamart in France, concentrates on Duke's work related to France. It is a bright idea to record work from Duke that was not been released previously but from which complete or unfinished scores were found at the Smithsonian Institution. From the 24 selections 15 are released for the first time. The first CD of the Duke Orchestra (DEMS 09/2-15) was a great surprise.

It was almost unbelievable how exactly Laurent Mignard had succeeded in playing Duke's music as we were used to hear it. This CD is an even greater surprise. It does not play the music exactly as we know it by heart.

This time Laurent Mignard has not only recorded several Ellington compositions, which are "fresh" to us, but has taken much more freedom in arranging the tunes that we know. The high quality of his arrangements as played by the impeccable musicians in his orchestra, together with the complete Dukish approach make this a very valuable addition to every Ellington collection. **Sjef Hoefsmi**



Courtesy Castle Productions

Ellington: French Touch by the Laurent Mignard Duke Orchestra

(Columbia / Sony / Juste une Trace)

Reviewed by Theodore (Ted) Hudson

Ellington: The French Touch gives us Ellington and Strayhorn compositions that in some way have a French inspiration or connection.

It opens with “The Good Life” (“La Belle Vie”), a tune heard in other Ellington contexts. The tune gives some sidemen a chance to shine, in this instance on baritone saxophone, alto saxophone, and trombone. Three pieces, none of which is highly orchestrated, are from Ellington’s *Goutelas Suite*: “Goof,” “Gogo,” and “Gigi.” The first is a riff-like tune with piano in the foreground and a sudden end, while the second, with clarinets and flute, segues into the third. This one is a bit more melodic than the preceding two. It begins with piano, followed by trumpet and tenor over a chanting ensemble before an alto saxophone takes it out. Organically “Gogo” and “Gigi” make a sort of mini-suite within a suite.

Selections from the film *Paris Blues* are more familiar. The title tune introduces the film’s thematic melody with an exceptionally good alto saxophone solo that a trombone remarks on up later. It may be the most successful piece on the CD in terms of solo and ensemble execution. Basie-associated “Battle Royal” is a real flag waver, to use a term from the big band era. It opens with an excited trumpet followed by vigorous tenor saxophone solos, and ends with a high note specialist way up there, the whole tune pushed by an propulsive beat that ends with Woodyard-ish hand drumming. “Paris Blues Alternate,” the thematic melody at a slower pace, showcases a tenor saxophone and clarinet. “Autumnal Suite” is another re-working of the melody, this time by clarinet, then tenor, then trombone over a tenor filigree.

Of the several individual compositions on the CD, “No Regrets” is a trombone tribute nod to Lawrence Brown, “Comme Ci Comme Ça,” a rather pedestrian piano piece, and “A Midnight in Paris,” a short work for piano by Paris lover Billy Strayhorn. The inclusion of “The Old Circus Train,” its shuffle beat and alto saxophone groove close to the original, is due to Duke’s having played it at Côte d’Azur.

The last group is comprised of bits of music for a 1961 resurrection of the satiric play *Turcaret*, written by Alain René Lesage in c.1708. The producer wanted music for the revived drama and asked Duke to compose it. The longest runs two minutes and thirty seconds, and there are four bits that last fewer than thirty seconds each. They apparently were intended to match the characters’ personalities or shifts in dramatic mood. The last of the ten excerpts, “Turcaret Final,” is a reprise of some of the play’s strains and themes.

Ellington never commercially recorded *Turcaret*. And the producer did not use live music; instead, he had a French group make a rehearsal-recording to be played during performances. The only recording we know of *Turcaret* music prior to this CD is from that rehearsal-recording session, played later on an ORTF radio broadcast.

Ellington: French Touch is assuredly well worth having. The Laurent Mignard Duke Orchestra is among, or is, the best orchestras devoted to Ellington and Strayhorn music, and its musicians have great “chops,” individually and as an ensemble. To the Laurent Mignard Duke Orchestra we exclaim, *Remerciements! Merci!*





Battle Royal—Laurent Mignard Duke Orchestra vs. Michel Pastre Big Band

Columbia Europe/Sony/just une Trace LC88725 (Import)

CD Reviewed by William McFadden

“The scope of music is immense and infinite. It is the Esperanto of the world,” said Duke Ellington. We now routinely witness outstanding examples of this nearly prophetic Ducalism from western European musicians who study and perform Ellington and Strayhorn in disciplines identical to what their classical colleagues devote to Bach and Mozart. Jerry VanRooijen’s Dutch Jazz Orchestra immediately comes to mind, and lately so does the Laurent Mignard Duke Orchestra from France.



On *Battle Royal*, you get twice the jazz orchestra excitement, a 2011 concert pairing Mignard’s organization with the Michel Pastre Big Band. This performance for an enthusiastic audience of 5,000 at the *Jazz `a Vienne* (Vienna) festival was conceived as a 50th anniversary *homage* to the 1961 record coupling Duke’s Orchestra with that of Count Basie: *First Time*. The original concept of a joint recording produced what many serious Duke and Count fans have come to regard as an incongruous novelty. But brother, did that side cook! With a full complement of musicians working the arrangements of Billy Strayhorn, Thad Jones, and the “Two Franks” Wess and Foster - in tandem, *First Time* packed a hefty, attention-getting punch. Ultimately and thankfully this unique collaboration proved to be much more swinging harmony than competition, a remarkable achievement, then and now.

Battle Royal was the realization of *Jazz `a Vienne* founder Jean-Paul Boutellier’s dream of recreating *First Time* for a concert audience. Mignard signed-on and became executive producer; saxophonist and swing bandleader Pastre was a natural choice for the “Basie” requirements. *Battle Royal* is a joyful, vibrant mix of recreation, re-constitution and tribute. Rather than copy or impersonate, both orchestras play in the *manner* of the original instrumentations and arrangements. The energy, the jubilation, the pride, the heart—all consistent and never held hostage to patronization or gimmick.

The co-leaders wisely decided not to merely cover the eight tunes on *First Time* and leave it at that. Naturally, out of the gate, charging is “Battle Royal,” with a total of 21 soloists at four bars apiece. For maximum chill-inducing impact, we recommend positioning a speaker next to each ear, at a tolerable volume, of course. “Duke” is on the right; “Basie” the left. Each musician will be heard with stunning clarity. Next is a swing tempo “In a Mellow Tone” followed by an opulent transposition of Billy Strayhorn’s “Manhattan Murals” with “Take the ‘A’ Train.” From there, the bands take turns showcasing familiar compositions owned by each of their respective forebears: “Dickie’s Dream,” with some robust voicings for the reeds section, and “Kinda Dukish/Rockin’ in Rhythm,” the closest any of the tunes comes to imitation, from piano intro through solos. This is not a complaint. Back in joint formation, the orchestras remain so for the concert’s duration. “Segue in C” has some of its edges buffed, and may be the best performance of all. On “It Don’t Mean a Thing,” the rhythm sections propel vocalists from each ensemble trading off in French-accented English lyric scat. Returning to swing mode (which begs for dancing), the “Duke” pianist is featured in yet another jewel by Strays, “Midnight in Paris.” Momentum again builds as “Wild Man Moore” commands the soloists to trade fours in a hurry. “Jumpin’ at the Woodside” is every bit the flag-waving closer it was on *First Time*. The encore is an equally powerful “Perdido” utilizing that great Gerald Wilson arrangement.

The late Sjef Hoefsmit advised those curious about what Duke Ellington and His Orchestra sounded like live to visit France. Getting yourself a copy of *Battle Royal*, be assured, is a terrific immediate alternative to overseas travel. *Viva la France!*



Duke Ellington Society

Washington, DC

march 2011

Laurent Mignard Duke Orchestra

Duke Ellington is Alive

Juste un Trace AMOC305369175646

Didier Desbois (as, cl) Aurelie Tropez (as,cl) Nicholas Montier (ts) Christophe Allemand (ts, cl) Philippe Chagne (bars, cl) Frank Delpout (tpt) Franck Guicherd (tpt) Francois Biensan (tpt) Richard Blanchet (tpt) Jean-Louis Damant (tbn) Guy Figlionos (tbn) Guy Arbion (bs-tbn) Philippe Milanta (pno) Bruno Rousselet (bs) Julie Saury (dms) Patrick Bacqueville (vcl) Laurent Mignard (cond); Rec. Aris, France, 2009

Ko-Ko / Harlem Airshaft / Black and Tan Fantasy / Kinda Dukish (into) Rockin' in Rhythm / Sophisticated Lady / Madness in Great Ones / Half The Fun/Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue / Isfahan / The Eighth Veil / It Don't Mean a Thing / Ad Lib on Nippon / Take The 'A' Train

The Duke Orchestra was founded in 2003 by highly respected French composer/arrange/conductor Laurent Mignard. This CD, recorded live in concert in 2009, demonstrates that this aggregation has earned a reputation as an authentic Ellington repertory orchestra. The arrangements are remarkably close to the originals, and the ensemble passages technically and nuanced, are remarkably like the originals. Wisely and respectfully, the instrumental soloists do not, however, attempt to replicate Ben or Cootie or Tricky Sam or any of the other unique, one-of-a-kind musical personalities on the original recordings, but assuredly they capture the spirit as they just 'play themselves'.

While all the renditions deserve praise, we were particularly drawn to two extended pieces. As evidenced here by tastefully delivered lessening and increasing dynamics and tempo, *Diminuendo and Crescendo* is a fascinating piece on its own without an ear-catching so-called wailing interlude, which is not to say that Nicholas Mantier cannot play an interesting sustained solo of his

own between the two. A twelve-minute *Ad Lib on Nippon* presents a wonderful interplay of piano, bass and clarinet; dauntless ensemble bravado and a truly splendid clarinet obligato/solo by Aurelie Tropez.

There is plenty more to enjoy on *Duke Ellington is Alive*. Fine muted trumpet and trombone and mellow clarinet on *Black and Tan Fantasy*, *Kinda Dukish* with pianist Philippe Milanta that segues into *Rockin' in Rhythm* and ends with trumpeter Jean-Louis Damant up in Cat territory, a Philippe Chagne baritone concerto *Sophisticated Lady*, Shakespeare inspired *Madness in Great Ones* and *Half the Fun*, the serene beauty (or is it melancholy) of *Isfahan* by altoist Didier Deshois, the inherent lyricism of *The Eighth Veil* explored by trumpeter Frank Delpout and a romping *It Don't Mean a Thing* this too, featuring vocalizing by Bacqueville.

We always feel a tinge of sadness for people who say they never got the chance to see Duke Ellington and his band in person. With this in mind, we say "amen" to the insightful words of Sjef Hoefsmit, "I never dreamed that it would be possible to come that close to the original performances. If you want to hear Ellington live, go to Paris, if you do not believe me, try and find a copy of this marvelous CD".

♪ Ted Hudson

Duke's "Far East Suite" opens week of Oriental Jazz

French bandleader pays tribute to jazz legend Ellington

Ramsay Short
Daily Star Staff

ZOUK MIKAEL, LEBANON: For many music fans on Saturday night, the ticket to have was *tarab*-pop legend Amr Diab in Tripoli. The man famous for inventing the Arabic-techno genre always pulls in a crowd, and these days he has emerged as the elder statesman in a field of less-accomplished young pretenders.

For movie buffs, the ticket to have was the series of films, documentaries and shorts showing at the Beirut DC Film Festival in Achrafieh, Beirut. With experimental and creative works by Arab directors, the festival has been making an indelible mark over the past week.

For this critic, however, the hottest ticket in town was the opening of the LibanJazz festival at Zouk Mikael, where French trumpeter, conductor and arranger Laurent Mignard and his 15-piece big band debuted – for the first time in Lebanon – Duke Ellington's 1966 work, "Far East Suite."

The Frenchman also gave us a number of classic Ellington tunes, creating an atmosphere closer to that of New York's legendary Cotton Club than that of an open-air gig in a recreated Roman amphitheater perched atop the bay of Jounieh under glittering stars.

The band performed impeccably, full of the required classic jazz swing that Ellington helped create way back when. Amusingly, when asked by reporters what Baghdad, Beirut and Damascus were like on his return home from the 1963 Mideast tour out of which "Far East Suite" was born, Ellington replied characteristically, "They're swinging places, man, swinging!"

Driven by the rhythm trio of Philippe Milanta on piano, the unstoppable Bruno Rousselet on contra-bass and the delicate

Julie Saury on drums, Mignard's team of horns – five saxophones/clarinetists, four trumpets and three trombones – were a tight outfit indeed.

The first half was all classic Ellington, from "In A Mellow Tone," to the Duke and his writing partner Billy Strayhorn's finely woven jazz arrangement of Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker Overture."

Between each composition the tall, gawky Mignard explained a little about the track's history and Ellington's history. In French and broken English, the bandleader had the crowd not only better informed but also in stitches of laughter with his anecdotes and self-effacing manner.

"Pyramid," we discover, for example, was the result of Ellington's trips to Spain and Africa, and what he called "Afro-Iberian," or "New Exotic" music. "Black And Tan Fantasy" is an exquisite, emotive funeral march made for trombone and trumpet – and played so finely here by Guy Figlionos and the inimitable Francois Biensan that we may as well have been advancing down a wide New Orleans avenue behind wailing pallbearers.

Would it be fair to say that Ellington is big band jazz and swing's greatest composer? On the strength of pieces like "Harlem Airshaft," and the incomparable "Mood Indigo," both of which the Mignard Orchestra performed Saturday, the answer is quite possibly yes.

These compositions of sophisticated swing are elevations in unified, instrumental music. "Harlem Airshaft," which was written by Ellington in a response to the hit tune entitled "In The Mood," which he hated as a piece of popular fluff with little musical dignity, is a driving ensemble piece in the hands of Mignard, and featured the bandleader himself in a rare trumpet solo, tightly wrought

blowing full of funk.

"Mood Indigo," a fantastic slice of lazy, groovy jazz, once again saw the soloists perform – sax, trombone and trumpet – and illustrated one of Ellington's best skills as a bandleader – and here Mignard's Duke was able to capture the essence of a great player in his work, so that it seemed to have been written personally for that musician. He brought out the best in his players by composing to their strengths, giving the tunes an incredibly vivid dimension.

Mignard, in pushing the brilliant skills of Biensan on trumpet – who, using his mute, managed to coax that very exquis-

"Depk"... is inspired by the region's traditional dabke dance

ite, Miles-like sound out of his horn – and Sylvain Rifflet on clarinet – who creates unadulterated Oriental-feel lovmaking with his instrument – compares favorably with Duke.

Following a brief interval on Saturday, the big band returned to the Zouk stage for the highlight of the evening, the "Far East Suite."

The lengthy work was composed in fits and starts following the band's 1963 State De-



Figlionos and Biensan solo on "Black and Tan Fantasy."

partment-sponsored tour of Syria, Lebanon, India, Sri Lanka, Iran, Iraq and other countries. It took two years after President John F. Kennedy's assassination for the pair to put the work together, and Mignard clearly worked with his band for a long time to put it together for an excited audience at LibanJazz.

"Far East Suite" is a trip around the nations Ellington visited, and indeed, it manages to catch the scales and tones of Eastern music combined with a skillful patchwork of improvisation. We hear tunes inspired by India's Taj Mahal like "Agra," which is led by Guy Arbib's powerful baritone sax, and "Blue Pepper," a sort of swinging Far East blues number full of driving sax and screaming trumpet.

Ellington always preferred to think of himself as a composer rather than a jazz musician, composing tone poems and extended suites as far back as the 1930's, and "Far East Suite"

clearly follows in that vein.

Mignard understands this, and the result is a performance of elegance and drive from an accomplished team. Milanta, on piano is particularly worthy of praise, his solos particularly moving.

From the opening track, "Tourist Point of View," to the final one, "Ad Lib On Nippon," Ellington is at his most passionate and lyrical, and Mignard pushes the sidemen to soaring solo work again – in particular on tracks about Iran like "Isfahan" and "Amad," which explores Syria, to the better-known "Bluebird of Delhi," in which Rifflet's delicate clarinet solo has the audience rapt.

The audience was also excited by "Depk" which came on the back of Ellington's visit to Amman and Beirut and is inspired by the region's traditional *dabke* dance. It is a wonderful piece, full of abstract riffing, at times sentimental and at times forceful.

"Mount Harissa," which

from the Zouk amphitheater is visible far above with its giant statue of the Virgin Mary, became the track most-beloved by a partisan audience Saturday, and deservedly so. Ellington, who was a supremely god-fearing and spiritual man, was incredibly moved by Harissa when he came to Lebanon, and the track, which is driven by a sumptuous piano melody and backed up by big horns sounding together, reflects that. The Mignard band captured that spirituality in detail.

Throughout "Far East Suite," there is a kind of harshness juxtaposed with beauty, an example of how perfectly Ellington understands something of the landscape and the people he visited in the Middle East.

In the hands of the Laurent Mignard Orchestra, the Lebanese audience got to witness "Far East Suite" live for the first time, and the LibanJazz festival could not have opened in a more effective way.

اوركسترا لوران مينيار في افتتاح أمسيات «الجاز في لبنان»

روح الشرق وروح أليغتون

الجاز الشرقي الصنف، المتضمن روح الشرق وموسيقاه، كذلك الموسيقى التي ألفها دوك أليغتون خصوصاً لبيروت، أنفسهم للشرق كي يكون حاضراً ويقوة في أسبوع «اوركسترا لوران مينيار».

مقاربات شرقية

الحضور العقول لحفل مينيار من محبي الجاز، رغم التخوف والإنشغالات مع بداية الموسم المدرسي والجامعي، ساعد على خلق حال من الانتصار بين الفرقة ومستمعينا، قدم للحفل بالفرنسية كريم غطاس، لنديد الموسيقى الشيلة مع سبعة عشر عازفاً بمن فيهم قائد الأوركسترا مينيار والعازفة الأثني الوحيدة على ألتها (الباتري).

انصب عزف برنامج السهرة بغالبيتها على معزوفات من أسطوانة Far East Suite الذي لم يتسن لأليغتون تقديمها في حفل للجمهور، «جيل حريص» الذي استوحى منه أليغتون مقارباته الموسيقية الشرقية، القسم الأول من البرنامج لاسم روح الشرق في تلك الانعلاجات الغنية المصرية تحديداً "Pyramid" بالإضافة إلى أجواء نيويوركية Airhaft Harlem. استحضرت ملمحاً أميركياً في الجاز، وأسود على وجه الخصوص، يهتم بما يجري من عزف في أقبية نيويورك وملاحيها.

لوران مينيار قيادة وعزفاً مع فرقته الكبيرة، قدموا مفهومهم الخاص إلى الشرق، بكل الفنية العالمية والروح الحماسة والخبرة العميقة لعمل أليغتون الموسيقي، فيما أحييتنا تحديداً، منابع العمل «الجازي» الأصلي، الذي حافظ على أميركيته ومنابته ونشأته، فجاء أكثر تعبيراً وقوة.

الحفل الذي تخللته استراحة لمدة عشر دقائق، كان كافياً كي يتقلنا عبر مهارات مينيار، إلى السفر مع الموسيقى، بانعكاس العالم الذي زاره أليغتون.

عناية جابر

كذلك نشر «الجاز» في لبنان والشرق الأوسط، هذه هي رغبته الأولى لكريم غطاس، أما الثانية فهي نشر الجاز الشرقي في العالم.

أسبوع السبت 18 أيلول في الثامنة والنصف وفي قاعة ذوق مكابيل، كانت أولى برمجة مهرجان «لبنان جاز» وهي خصصت في عنوانها العريض كتحية للموسيقى دوك أليغتون احتفالاً بمرور أربعين سنة على زيارته الشرق أوسطية. أحيا الحفل لوران مينيار والعازفون «بيغ باندر»، وهو قائد «اوركسترا لوران مينيار»، المعروف بأنه الأكثر إخلاصاً لدوك أليغتون، عملاق الجاز، بين قادة الأوركسترات، وأفضل من يقدمه ويعزف له. مقطوعة أليغتون "Les suites Orientales"، أو «مقتربات شرقية» كذلك "Far East Suite"، التي تحكي علاقة أليغتون بالشرق حيث أحيانا منذ عقود أربعة أمسيات استثنائية في «المتاترو الكبير» يوماً، ضمن جولة شرقية تنقل فيها بين دمشق وبغداد واهلران وكابول.

مزاج جازي

نحن جميعاً نملك مزاجاً «جازياً» بمعنى آخر لا يوجد بيننا من هو حر تماماً أو خال من الشكوى. من هذا المزاج الحزين إلى هذا الحد أو ذاك، ومن الرغبة في علاقة صحيحة بين الجمهور اللبناني وموسيقى الجاز، كما استعادة صلة قديمة به، في رهن تغيب الهويات والذاكرة والخصوصيات عمل القميص على مهرجان «لبنان جاز» أو «جاز في لبنان» التي مغامرة إحيائه، بعد أن شارب موسم المهرجانات على الإنهاء، وعاد الشباب إلى مدارسهم وجامعاتهم. كريم غطاس الشاب اللبناني الأصل، عاد إلى لبنان في فكرته إلى «لبنان جاز» لميلطق تحديه مع الشاعرة والغنانة ابتيل عدنان عرابية «مهرجان الجاز في لبنان»، وليتعاون مع «مهرجان ذوق مكابيل» بإقامة سهرة موسيقية أربع، قاسمها الشرق هو موسيقى الجاز في تنوعها من سهرة إلى أخرى، يحاول من خلالها غطاس ربط الشرق والغرب عبر مَن موسيقى واحد.

من بين كل المناسبات المهرجانية اللبنانية، أتت هذه السنة بحق، لتكون سنة الجاز باهتمام، نظراً إلى كثرة الأنشطة الموسيقية التي أقيمت لهذه الغاية في العاصمة بيروت والمناطق كافة، سواء على خشبات المهرجانات الكبيرة والمعروفة عند القاري، أو تلك الشبابية بشكل رئيس، التي جرت في الساحات العامة أو الباني القديمة.

في الحقيقة إن «الجاز» يتقدم في العالم أجمع، كثرت عندنا لهذه السنة، من كونه يتضمن تلك الحال الشعرية العاطفية التي توثق بين محبي هذا الصنف الموسيقي، التوثيق أيضاً يأتي من الروح الاحتجاجية لموسيقى الجاز التي تسهم وتحض على التعبير الذاتي، والتبادل الثقافي. سلاسة الجاز كذلك، تجمع بين جمهوره، إذ يكفي أن يكون حسن السامع للجاز «مترنومي»، قادراً على التقاط الإيقاع الموسيقي من خلال آذنين مكيفتين على هضم إيقاع يومياتنا الحياتية حتى يستسيغه ويترطب له مباشرة.



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