

Chapter 4 guides the reader through the various types of civic, religious, cultural, and governmental organizations that support trova in Yucatán today. As in chapter 1, the discussion here interweaves the author's firsthand accounts, adding detail and insight to otherwise straightforward descriptions of clubs, societies, guilds, and various systems of arts sponsorship. What emerges is a picture of trova sustained by "individuals' concerted participation in different groups and associations" (158), without which the music would probably not survive. Trova's importance to the maintenance of a Yucatecan cultural identity, in the face of its foreign origins and Mexicanized adaptations, forms a fascinating and instructive example of cultural sustainability.

Beautiful Politics of Music: Trova in Yucatán, Mexico offers a wide-ranging account of this rich Mexican regional tradition that effectively balances historiography and anthropology. Although the book's organization is somewhat unusual, and the author's emphasis on political and cultural contexts leaves less room for musical and historical detail, taken as a whole it is a useful introduction to the genre's formation and a compelling case study of its social, cultural, and political functions in the lives of Yucatecans today.

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Duke Ellington Studies. Edited by John Howland. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Duke Ellington Studies (DES) is a welcome addition to the scholarly Duke Ellington literature. This volume implicitly adds to the culturally elevating discourse surrounding Ellington, situating him in the Cambridge Composer series next to figures such as Mozart, Shostakovich, and Boulez. As editor John Howland writes in his preface, "this volume represents an important step toward extending the cultural breadth of the Cambridge Composer series to include major composers from the field of jazz and popular music" (xv). Howland explains that *DES* was originally planned as a partner volume to the 2014 *Cambridge Companion to Duke Ellington*, edited by Edward Green. The two books, while exemplifying some of the modern upswing in Ellington scholarship and commentary, appeal to different audiences. The *Cambridge Companion* provides an overview of Ellington's life and works for an educated non-specialist and undergraduate market, while *DES* delves deeper into the discourse surrounding Ellington and may appeal to a more specialist readership.

The approaches taken by the authors in this volume illustrate how jazz studies has caught up with traditional musicology in recent years: topics covered—in chapter order—include Ellington's place in society and culture (Phil Ford on Ellington's constructed entertainment persona on film, John Howland on marketing to the

middlebrow, and Catherine Tackley on Ellington's reception in the United Kingdom); new takes on Ellington's performance and compositional style (Bill Dobbins on Ellington's piano style and Walter van de Leur on the significance of notation to Ellington's compositional process); and the significance of race, gender, and technological developments to Ellington's artistic career (David Schiff on *Such Sweet Thunder*, Gabriel Solis on Duke Ellington's LP output in the post-World War II era, Carl Woideck on Ellington's imagined Africa, and John Wriggle on *A Drum Is A Woman*). Howland's suggested organizing principles are as follows: "Ellington's relation to art and entertainment discourse" (chapters 1 and 2); "Ellington's presence on the international stage" (chapters 3 and 8); "shop talk" (chapters 4 and 5); and "innovative reconsiderations of the bandleader's long undervalued postwar career" (chapters 6, 7, and 9).

As well as appearing in individual chapters grouped into topical sections, themes run throughout the volume. Howland, for instance, considers Ellington's place amongst the "highbrows." Using Dwight Macdonald's ideas of "Masscult and Midcult," Howland suggests that the mixed marketing strategies surrounding Ellington often led to confused messages.¹ The presentation of Ellington's records in deluxe packaging, denoting canonization and high-end products, were readily and inexpensively available. Howland's chapter is supported by reproduction of images: we see the red-velvet cover of *Ellingtonia* (1943) and the deluxe packaging of *Black, Brown and Beige* (1943). An enduring narrative about Ellington is the way that he and his music began to be discussed and appreciated in classical music terms. Several *DES* contributors use the famous Constant Lambert quotation—"Ellington is . . . a real composer, the first jazz composer of distinction"—to support the early valorization of Ellington against classical-music criteria.² Although this can be taken as a general trope of Ellington criticism, Howland makes explicit that much of the language used was suggested in a publicity manual provided to towns on Ellington's tours by Irving Mills. "Sell Ellington as a great artist," it says, "a musical genius whose unique style and individual theories of harmony have created a new music. . . . He has been accepted seriously by many of the greatest minds in the world of music, who have regarded it as a privilege to study his art and to discuss his theories with him."³ Ellington's fluency between commonly understood "brows" is teased apart and reflected upon by various authors throughout the volume. Ford comments upon Ellington's manipulation of 1930s racial stereotypes to construct himself as a suave, urbane counterpart to Armstrong's "bowing and scraping to the white audience" (1), a distinction also noted by Tackley. In the final chapter of the volume, Wriggle makes a convincing case for re-evaluating 1957's *A Drum is a Woman*, the compositional content of which has frequently been neglected by critics.

¹ Dwight MacDonal, "Masscult and Midcult," pt. 1, *Partisan Review* 27 (Spring 1960): 203–33, and "Masscult and Midcult," pt. 2, *Partisan Review* 31 (Fall 1964): 589–631.

² Constant Lambert, *Music Ho!: A Study of Music in Decline* (first published 1934; republished London: Penguin Books, 1948).

³ The William Morris Agency's *Manual for Advertising*, ca. 1938, reprinted in Howland, *Duke Ellington Studies*, 58.

Many aspects of Ellington's political agenda are revealed through contextual explanations of current or contemporaneous society. For example, Ford's essay compares Ellington to Obama, suggesting that African Americans in the public eye are expected to conform to black stereotypes created by the media. He nuances this viewpoint, concluding that Obama's image is an updated form of Ellington's careful self-stylisation. "Moving black people from 'they' to 'we' is the cultural project that Obama and Ellington have in common," he says (27). Essays by Schiff and Woideck deal with covert racism and Ellington's imagined Africa, respectively. Schiff explains Ellington's lifelong affiliation and engagement with racial politics using 1943's *Black, Brown and Beige*, and its sequels, *New World A-Comin'* (1943), *Deep South Suite* (1946), and *A Tone Parallel to Harlem* (1951). Ellington's involvement in the left-leaning Popular Front, which brought together many of the organizations which fought against fascism and for workers' and civil rights, ended with the end of the Front after the Peekskill Riots and the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace in 1949. *Such Sweet Thunder*, says Schiff, achieved the multiple goals of positioning Ellington as Othello (along with the innuendo that the character implies), reinstating his jazz credentials after a number of concert works, and subtly utilizing Shakespeare as a shield for political protest. Seemingly aligning himself with the white cultural elite by setting Shakespeare's text to music, Ellington (like the Communist Joseph Papp before him) chose Shakespearian lines that could be delivered verbatim but interpreted as politically subversive. "The title track and 'Half the Fun'," writes Schiff, "portrayed cross-race relationships, but not as a pas de deux. The music, upending the Bard, speaks to a white Other from the point of view of a black subject" (189).

Woideck's overall argument is that for a continent and history so important to Ellington's ideology and artistic expression, Ellington drew on an imagined Africa rather than musical traits brought to the table by African drummers in the band or things discovered on his trips to Senegal in 1966 and Zambia in 1973. At many times in his career, Ellington showed himself to be a "student of Negro history" (234), demonstrating this in many forms, from the jungle style and "exotic entertainment" provided by the African American bands and dancers at Harlem's Cotton Club in the 1920s to the history of the African American in the United States depicted in the tone parallel *Black, Brown and Beige* and 1947's *Liberian Suite*. Woideck nuances this narrative with rigorous source study, concluding that the nature of Ellington's study cannot be categorically proven due to the lack of corroborating archival materials. In a 1941 interview, Ellington claimed that "Negro music is American. It developed out of the life of the people here in this country" (251).⁴ When the subject of study is revealed to have conflicting or changing ideas, how does the scholar decide which deserves more weight? Tellingly, Woideck comments: "Ellington does not say that his suite's rhythms were based on Liberian rhythms, but that his music's moods and rhythms were related to *his knowledge* of Liberian history" (Woideck 235, emphasis added).

⁴ John Pittman, "The Duke Will Stay on Top," no source, n.p., reprinted in Mark Tucker, ed., *The Duke Ellington Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 150–51.

Throughout the volume, *DES* could have been helpfully expanded by devoting more space to the challenges conducting archival research on Ellington. Although many chapters successfully support their arguments with archival proof, ambiguities are sometimes left unexplored.

John Wriggle gives a considered reading of *A Drum is a Woman*, explaining that *Drum* is an often overlooked album in the Ellington pantheon, falling in the shadow of 1956's *At Newport* and 1957's *Such Sweet Thunder* and susceptible to the school of jazz criticism that denigrates theater pieces in a composer's output. Wriggle argues that several challenges to contemporary audiences came in the form of the multimedia format (it was also broadcast as a CBS color-television feature), the extended "tone parallel" focussing on African American and jazz history, and the "broadcast of an all-black cast to a still largely-segregated audience" (267). He explains *A Drum is a Woman*'s origination, using Ellington's own words: "you know how it is . . . a musician will say to his woman—'here's \$2, baby, go on down to the tavern or to a movie and leave me alone for a while with the drum.' And so we say a drum is a woman—it kind of takes the place of her" (285). The album artwork, which depicts a curvaceous woman sitting on a drum, suggests the two can be conflated. A power balance between men and women is suggested by the lyrical content. "It isn't civilized to beat women . . . but . . . tell me what else can you do with a drum?" asks the male protagonist Caribee Joe. And yet Ellington's original album script's handwritten notes contain a detailed description of a highly sexualized image of "a beautiful black woman" carrying out a "native sex dance" (285). So, Wriggle claims, Ellington had both a chaste and a sensual picture of a woman in mind. In the #metoo era, readers are likely to think carefully about these various manifestations of sexual violence and the male gaze and their implications for our understanding of Ellington, the women involved, and the audiences. Ultimately, though, the presentation and reception of *A Drum is a Woman* confirm the patriarchal dominance of 1950s jazz and the wider contemporary society. Wriggle makes a compelling case for a reconsideration of the music, media, and themes of this oft-neglected work.

DES is well edited: all chapters are well written, persuasively argued, and supported by sources appropriate to the chapter content. Furthermore, these chapters contribute much to Ellington scholarship. Most importantly, the new perspectives contained within this book encourage the reader to listen again to Duke Ellington's repertoire, this time with fresh, newly informed ears.

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