

“Jazz, Revue and a Thriller” The Response of the Birmingham Press to Duke Ellington’s 1933 Tour

Pedro Cravinho, Birmingham City University

Introduction

I delivered a paper on this topic at the 25th International Duke Ellington Study Group Conference, hosted by the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire between 25 and 27 May 2018.ⁱ In addition, given my passion about Ellington’s music, it was my privilege to become a new Board member of DESUK, joining a vibrant and passionate group of Ellington enthusiasts, as Frank Griffith kindly announced in *Blue Light* (Autumn 2018). My decision to submit this essay to *Blue Light* was also linked to a broader reflection about archives.ⁱⁱ Over recent years, I have been conducting original research, sifting through local archives in Birmingham to see what they can tell me about jazz history in this multicultural metropolis.ⁱⁱⁱ In fact, most of my research related to the first half of the twentieth century has been conducted in local archives,^{iv} as they play a significant role in the reconstruction of local jazz history. However, as has already been argued, archives are “laced with contradictions and ambiguities. ... What is saved in archives often determines what gets theorized, analyzed, interrogated, deconstructed, activated.”^v And, I would add, celebrated too! As is the case with the many historical essays published by *Blue Light* that are dedicated to a celebration of Ellington’s life and music.

This essay explores the reception that the Birmingham press gave to the Duke Ellington Orchestra and its music during his first tour of the United Kingdom in July 1933. It is important to highlight that it was Duke’s first European tour.^{vi} As Catherine Tackley observes, “there are nuances in the writing published in response to Ellington’s visit which tell us not only about the performances themselves, including details that are otherwise unobtainable, but also about British attitudes to jazz.”^{vii} The same point could be made about any African American artists visiting Birmingham up to this period. Probably one of the earliest surviving records documenting such a visit is an advertisement for the “Female American Serenaders” at Birmingham Town Hall on 9 July 1847,^{viii} who are appearing for the “First Time in

Birmingham”. What is described as an “invitation card of the coloured ladies” depicts seven young female musicians going by the names of “Madames Cora, Jumba, Woski, Miami, Yarico, Womba & Rosa” who are shown playing a banjo and percussion instruments.^{ix} The following decades would see a number of prominent international African Americans artists visiting the city,^x Duke Ellington and his orchestra being among them. However, between 1935 and 1956, American artists had their opportunities to work in the UK curtailed, on account of a restriction instituted by the Minister of Labour, who exercised their jurisdiction over work permits,^{xi} a period often described as the “Musicians’ Union Ban”.^{xii} Although the Ellington Orchestra would not perform again in the UK until after World War II, “they made a brief private visit on 4 May 1939, when they stopped off en route from Europe to New York. Duke did some shopping and was interviewed by the *Melody Maker*; Rex Stewart and Harry were interviewed for *Rhythm*.”^{xiii} Duke’s presence in Birmingham in later periods will be the subject of (an)other article(s).

Over the last decade, British scholarship has consistently reaffirmed that jazz has been firmly established as part of Britain’s cultural diversity for the best part of the past hundred years, reflecting and responding to specific social conditions. However, with a few exceptions, publications about the history of jazz in Britain, whether written by journalists, fans or scholars, have so far focused primarily on London.^{xiv} This state of affairs is mirrored in other European countries, where the capital city has become enshrined as the centre of this music for the past century in each country’s diasporic national history. Literature with a focus on the history of jazz in Birmingham is scarce,^{xv} and this largely holds true regarding material on Duke Ellington’s 1933 British tour,^{xvi} although, the performances in London, Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow are well documented.^{xvii} And the same can be said about the Duke Ellington Orchestra’s appearance on a BBC radio broadcast, or Duke’s interview during the same period.^{xviii} In fact, there

is practically nothing published about his presence in Birmingham.^{xix} This reinforced my decision to investigate what might be unearthed in the local press. With this exploration of the Birmingham press's reception of Duke Ellington's music in July 1933, it is my aim to contribute to an understanding of the British response to jazz outside its capital city.

Duke Ellington's 1933 UK Tour

The Duke Ellington Orchestra's 1933 UK visit was part of the bandleader's first European tour.^{xx} Their arrival on 9 June was recalled by Peter Tanner at *Ellington '85* in Oldham, during a presentation on Duke's 1933 UK tour:^{xxi}

And on June the ninth, Friday, June the ninth the SS Olympic docked at Southampton Docks, and ..., stepping off were the whole Duke Ellington Orchestra, complete with singer Ivie Anderson, dancer Bessie Dudley, Irving Mills, and Duke himself and Duke's manager then, Kay Kay Hanson. They were met by Jack Hylton and Percy Mathieson Brooks, the then editor of M[elody] M[aker], and taken by train up to Waterloo, where an enormous crowd awaited them, including Jack Hylton's band who played on the platform a welcome to the Ellington band, and a lot of press was there.^{xxii}

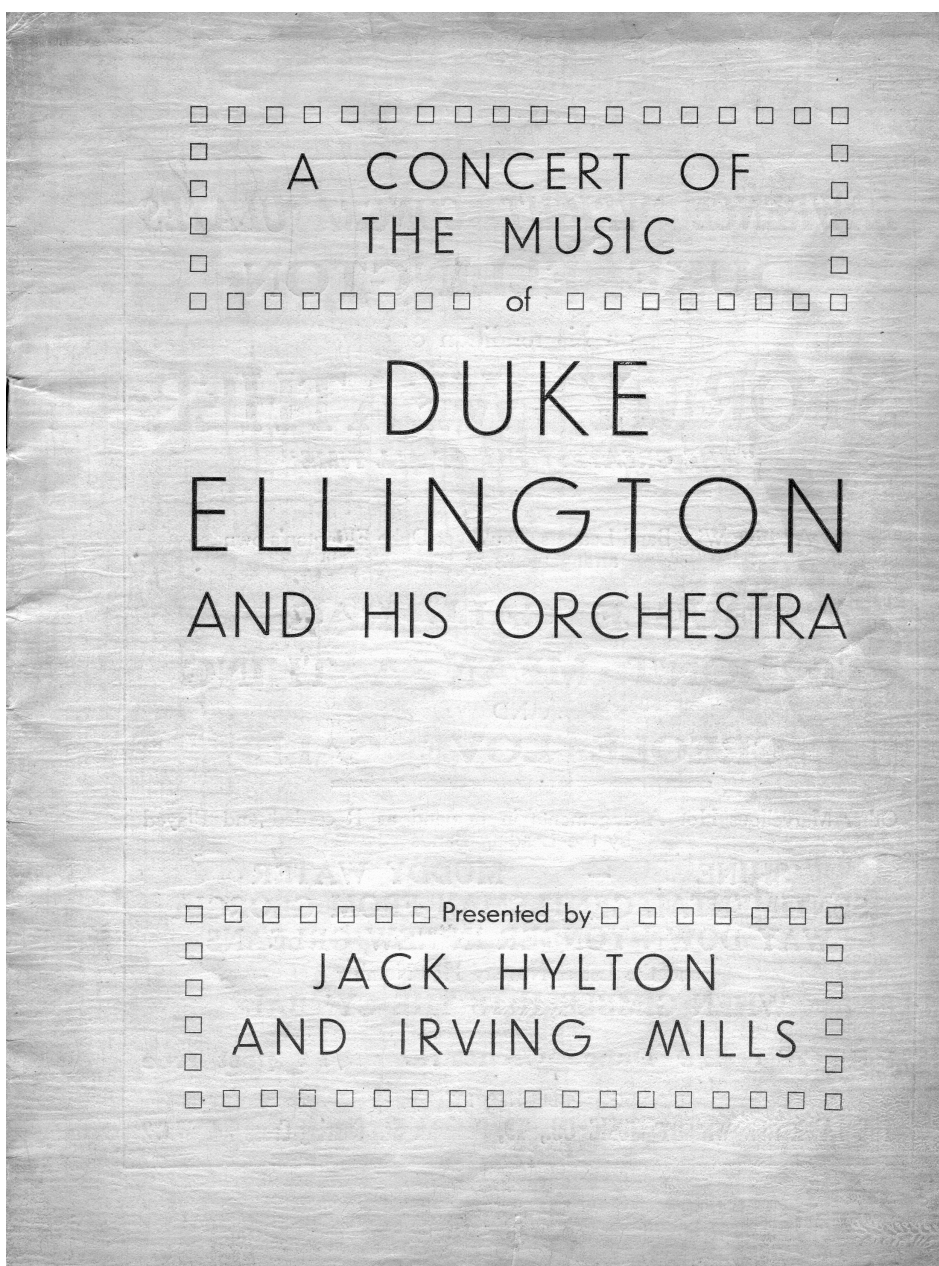
This milestone was also given significant coverage by the press at the time, as Tanner recalled:

Old members here, perhaps a few of you anyway, will remember how starved we were of jazz live in those days. We had records, of course, but nothing like the excitement of the thought of Duke Ellington and his Orchestra actually playing live for us. We'd a few American dance bands like Hal Kemp and Ted Lewis, but here was the great Ellington band itself. And, fostered by the Melody Maker, (which) every

week came out with announcements of what was happening, that they really were going to arrive.^{xxiii}

Indeed, *Melody Maker* had a significant role to play in terms of the expectations generated around Duke's arrival.^{xxiv} On 17 June, Ellington finally made the front page under the headline "The Duke at the Palladium":

Well! He's here! We have been reading about the Duke this last four or five years; he has become an almost legendary figure; it seemed impossible that we should ever see him in the flesh, or hear those amazing sounds other than via a gramophone. Yet, unbelievably, he is here.^{xxv}



Scan of the cover to an original 1933 UK tour programme.
From the collection of Quentin Bryar.
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Birmingham Press

Ellington's first performance in Birmingham took place at the Hippodrome in mid-July as part of his tour.^{xxvi} Jack Hylton and his band were the last to perform at this significant West Midlands venue before Duke's arrival, supposedly presaging a summer shutdown. According to the *Birmingham Mail*:

The final bill at the Birmingham Hippodrome before the summer closure will be recalled until the house re-opens its doors in August. Chief reason for this recollection will be the visit of Mr. Jack Hylton and his band. This gifted purveyor of "hot" music (one must avoid the temptation to describe it as "jazz" because the term is a taboo to the modern conductor) stands in the forefront of his vocation.^{xxvii}

However, a few weeks later, the *Birmingham Gazette* theatre correspondent penned a brief note under the title "American orchestra: Week's performance for Birmingham Hippodrome" to announce the temporary reopening of the venue occasioned by Ellington's visit to the city:

The Birmingham Hippodrome is to make a brief and temporary return from the "summer vacation" next week. In other words, it is to re-open on Monday for just the one week - to present to Birmingham Duke Ellington and his orchestra, which recently arrived in this country from America and has aroused a great deal of interest by its appearances at the London Palladium and its broadcast performance. After next week, the Hippodrome will return to its "vacation" until 7 August.^{xxviii}

Duke's arrival in Birmingham was widely covered in the daily press. The *Birmingham Mail* front page of 14 July blared: "Hip! Hip!! Hippodrome!!! First and only Midlands appearance! Jack Hylton presents (by arrangement with Irving Mills) Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra!!! A Revolution in Rhythm! And full variety company."^{xxix} That same issue included a photograph of Duke Ellington's Orchestra, and a short article under the title "Negro band's visit: Hippodrome reopens for a special week", as follows:

Though the summer vacation for the Birmingham Hippodrome does not end until August Bank Holiday, it is being suspended next week in order that local desire to see Mr. Duke Ellington and his Orchestra may be gratified. This remarkable group of negro musicians, who have such noteworthy success in London, will accordingly open at the Hurst Street house on Monday evening, supported by a full-length vaudeville programme.

Mr. Ellington will preside at the piano, and the orchestra, whose playing is said to be alternately thrilling and soothing, will expound negro music in all stages of its development from

the swamp to the night club. With the band are Bailey and Derby, dancers, Miss Bessie Dudley, "the original Snake's Hips Girl", and Miss Ivie Anderson, vocalist.^{xxx}

The following day, the *Birmingham Gazette* confirmed that the Birmingham Hippodrome would temporarily reopen to present "Duke Ellington and his Orchestra, the America combination which has been in London, Liverpool and Glasgow and which aroused both great interest and much musical controversy."^{xxxi}

After Ellington's first performance at the Birmingham Hippodrome on Monday, 17 July, the *Birmingham Gazette* published a lengthy review under the title "Jazz, revue and a thriller", written by its drama critic, "W.H.B.":

I have already confessed that much-boomed jazz bands, which from time to time appear on the variety stages of Birmingham mean no more in my ears than a score of bombs flung haphazard into a hardware factory. It appears that Duke Ellington and celebrated orchestra have a reputation of flinging the bombs with a surer hand than the members of most jazz bands. Personally, I did not notice the difference, but the audience at the Birmingham Hippodrome last night seemed to do so. Duke Ellington and his orchestra - they are all coloured gentlemen - received a very cordial - not to say vociferous - reception, and I have no doubt that the people who do not start as violently as I do when the trumpet blares against a steel helmet will fill the Hippodrome night by night during the week. This jazz band, it is true, is a little different from most.^{xxxii}

W.H.B. also had something to say about specific routines, describing Bessie Dudley's performance as having "primitive appeal". Ivie Anderson was characterized as someone "who sings a song about the weather which is in artistic accord with the depression of most of the weather we get" (as *Blue Light* readers will be aware, the reference was to 'Stormy Weather').^{xxxiii} Bailey and Derby are mentioned, "who have the reputation of being the most agile of the exponents of that most ungraceful art, tap-dancing".^{xxxiv} All the other vaudeville acts earned W.H.B.'s praise for being "appropriate",^{xxxv} which included a gladiatorial number by Rome and Romain, A.C. Astor the ventriloquist, Nicol and Martin, "who bring comedy into trick cycling", and Jane Ayr and Eddie Leslie, "who produce laughs by sheer foolery".^{xxxvi}

The *Birmingham Mail's* review, under the title "'Hot music' and poetry: A remarkable combination of coloured performers", struck a different tone, finding much to admire in Duke's music:

Duke Ellington and his Band have conquered Birmingham. The Hippodrome has done well to open its doors for a week to enable the city to hear this remarkable combination of coloured performers in syncopated music.

One confesses to a distaste for much that is labelled “hot music”, but this is subtly different. The whole atmosphere of weird notes, produced with cunning art, conjures up visions of a primitive people; of dark warriors in the frenzy of the battle; of crooning songs in forest clearings; of winds whispering through the leaves or bending the tall heads of giant trees.

‘Trees’ was one example of the hand’s art given at last night’s performances. There was only a humming suspiration of the well-known air; one could visualise in the super-imposed notes the scene that moved the poet to his verse, and even the composer could not have resented the liberty taken with his work. ‘Indigo Blues’ was another of the triumphs, colourful and moving.^{xxxvii}

It continued its appraisal with commentaries on the other routines of the evening: “Individuals who supported the band were Miss Ivie Anderson, a singer who puts extraordinary feeling into her work; Miss Bessie Dudley, whose every fibre responds to the music in her dancing; and Messrs. Bailey and Derby, tap dancers of rare distinctions.”^{xxxviii}

The same day, another local daily, the *Birmingham Post*, also published a short review, under the title “Variety theatre”:

The Hippodrome – Whatever one may think or say of “hot” music, which, like an Egyptian cigarette, is very much an acquired taste that may eventually suit the palate, there is no doubt that, while a portion of the audience at the Hippodrome last night was bewildered, the great number fell ecstatically at the shrine of Duke Ellington and his band of extraordinary modern virtuosity. They certainly do possess an ejaculatory style of jazz instrumentation that has brought London to their feet, but what suits the more cosmopolitan taste at the Metropolis is no indication of the sometimes more balanced opinion of Birmingham.

Consequently, before Mr. Ellington terminates a period in this country, the curtain, which has remained lowered over the scenes of local vaudeville in recent times, is raised at the Hippodrome this week for the particular reason of giving habitués the opportunity of seeing Mr. Ellington for themselves, after which the house in Hurst Street will again be in the decorators’ hands.^{xxxix}

It continued...

The music is the cult of the modern expressed in cacophonous sound which gradually creeps into melody – extraordinary music indeed. The band, which never seems to tire, is assisted by Miss Anderson in peculiar but fascinating tunes; Miss Bessie Dudley, the original snake-hips girl (the adjectives are true); and by Bailey and Derby in “rhapsody in taps”. It is certainly a remarkable band, if nothing else.^{xl}

As the week progressed, the local press regularly gave notice of Duke’s two daily shows at the Birmingham Hippodrome (6.40 pm and 8.50 pm). Additionally, the Duke Ellington Orchestra also gave a two-hour performance at the Palais de Dance on July 21, which was announced by the *Birmingham Mail* as a double bill:

Gala Dance at the Palais de Danse, Monument Road

To night – Dancing at 8 p.m. (Bert Thomas and his Band)

Duke Ellington and His Band – 12 p.m. till 2 a.m.^{xi}

Duke’s last performance at the Birmingham Hippodrome took place the following day, on Saturday, 22 July.



Duke’s Short Interview And Criticism

One outcome of Duke Ellington’s presence in Birmingham that week is a brief interview published in the *Birmingham Mail* under the title “A chat with Mr. Duke Ellington: Why he is different from other composers?”:^{xlii}

Thanks to B.B.C.’s gramophone recitals, Mr. Duke Ellington was known over here long before he arrived in the flesh. His music, therefore, is not new to us, and if it is has more often assaulted than soothed our somewhat conservative ears, it has also intrigued them. Dance band music has become so stereotyped that it seems to bear the stamp of mass production. Well, Mr. Ellington is not that sort of composer. He must express his own individuality. That much I learned in the course of a few minutes’ chat with him the other night before his show at the Hippodrome.

One could not help being impressed, in the first place, by his modest bearing and his natural courtesy, which had almost an old-world air about it. As a boy in Washington, D.C., where he was reared, he won a scholarship at school, but he was always consumed with the idea of taking up music. The piano was his first love, and he has remained forever faithful to it. He studied theory but felt that it cramped his scope.

Theory too cramping

“I wanted to cultivate an independent style,” he said. ‘I have known many people who were naturally fine musicians until they began to study, and then they became too stereotyped. If there is something within one which is waiting to be expressed, it cannot be brought out in the way music is taught and written. Negro music has never been written and taught; it comes naturally from the people without any veneer.

“I was 19 years old when I stopped studying. I know my compositions violate many rules. I have got to do it or else be tied down and lose my individuality. Of course, I have learnt a good deal from the great composers by observing how each may deal with an incident or a theme, but I keep away from them as far as possible for fear of being influenced by their styles.’ (I notice that Mr. Ellington was carrying two gramophone records, one of which was a recording of Delius’s “On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring”, conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham.)

Starved in New York

“And how did you start on your present career?” (I asked.)

“Five of us went to New York in 1923. We starved for about five weeks, and then we got a cabaret job. We have never looked back. We went to the Kentucky Club in Broadway, and stayed for five years, and then to the exclusive Cotton Club at Harlem, where we remained four years. I gradually increased the band from five to 14 players, which represents our present strength.”

And broadcasting?

“In America, broadcasting is the lifeblood of the artist as well as the salesman. You can sell anything on the air, and to us, it has been the means of achieving a large measure of our success. We toured the States before coming to England, but business has been so bad during the depression that the schedule has constantly to be revised.

“Anyhow, I hate schedules,” added Mr. Ellington.

And with that remark, so typical of his outlook on music, Mr. Ellington left me to prepare for his first performance in Birmingham. For the benefit of wireless listeners who know his band only through the medium of wireless or the gramophone, I ought to add that the stage performance gives one a totally different idea of its capabilities. If you do not care for the “hot” music, they will “roar you as gently as any sucking dove”. But all the time you have the feeling that here is something different from anything you have ever heard before.^{xliii}

The criticism that Duke Ellington and his Orchestra received by the local press is to some extent a product of how each journalist as an individual translated Duke’s performances and music, culturally.^{xliiv} Whereas the *Birmingham Mail* and the *Birmingham Post* critics clearly enjoyed the Ellington concert, the *Birmingham Gazette* critic had a different perception, attacking both Duke and his music. These reviews triggered some exchanges of correspondence among their readers, with some of them on the offensive. One such was the following piece, “Anti-jazz”, written under the pen name of “Cromwell”:

Sir,- I am sure that your dramatic critic, “W.H.B.”, will receive much support from the theatre-going public for his remarks on the jazz bands that appears on the Birmingham stages. The impression this creates is truly as “W.H.B.” describes. And Duke Ellington is no exception; he is worse! After he had enjoyed a few items of entertainment, Ellington put before us some barbaric sort of row which he has the boldness (as Americans have) to call “musical compositions”. It is difficult to imagine what opinion our composers of real music would have of such stuff. -Yours, etc., Cromwell, Marston Green, Birmingham.^{xlv}

Others came to Ellington’s defence, among them the writer of a letter entitled “Duke Ellington’s band”, published by the *Birmingham Gazette*:

Sir,- I have nothing but the deepest sympathy for your dramatic critic, “W.H.B.” and your correspondent “Cromwell”, who appear to be suffering from a severe attack of anti-jazz complex. “Cromwell’s” sense of hearing has undoubtedly been affected by the wildlife of Marston Green. If he expected Mr. Ellington’s drummer to execute a few birds’ warbles, cock-crows, pig-grunts, etc., then I can quite understand that the vivid pulsating, rhythm and melody put forth by Duke must have caused him some uneasiness. It would be most interesting to learn exactly what “Cromwell” expected. I had the great pleasure of hearing the band render two of Mr. Ellington’s compositions - I refer to ‘Mood Indigo’ and ‘Sophisticated Lady’ - and, remarkable though it may appear to “Cromwell”, these were accorded a magnificent reception by the audience. Although your

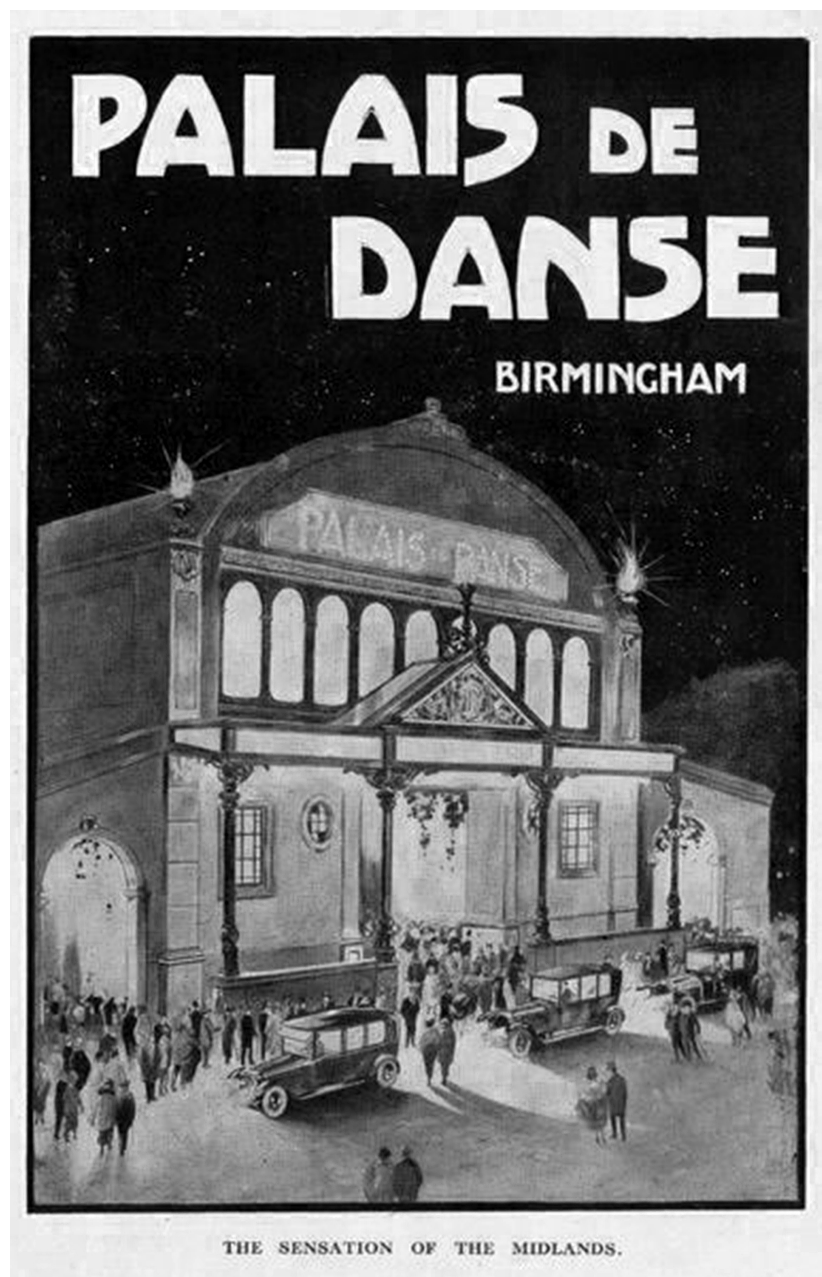
correspondent finds it difficult to imagine what opinion “our composers of real music” would have of such stuff, it appears quite simple to me: how they must envy the Duke.^{xlvi}

In the months that followed, discussions that were centred around jazz and “coloured musicians”, with the inevitable racial connotations, also appeared in the Birmingham press, accompanied by openly racist comments, which is unsurprising given the colonial ideology that dominated at that time.

Conclusion

This essay has analysed the response by the local press to the Duke Ellington Orchestra’s performances in Birmingham in July 1933. Birmingham jazz aficionados’ ideas at that time about “coloured bands”, “coloured musicians” and the sounds and images of jazz (or what was perceived as jazz) had a huge influence on how Duke Ellington was received. The local press, alongside the national press, also had a significant role to play in moulding those perceptions. Although local critics may have failed to distinguish Duke’s music from the jazz and dance music played at that time in the West Midlands dance clubs,^{xlvi} many local jazz aficionados understood it as ‘authentic jazz’. As Katherine Williams observes, “the relationship between jazz and its performance spaces is bound up with cultural connotations and audience expectations”.^{xlvi} The criticism of Duke Ellington’s 1933 Birmingham concerts serves as an example of this. The cultural connotations and the expectations of Birmingham audiences and journalists were related not only to the musical aesthetics and styles of the performance but were also deeply bound up with individual perceptions. As such, an analysis of the discourses created by those who experienced and wrote about the music must take into consideration the context in which they were produced and the specific time and place – whether watching vaudeville acts at the Birmingham Hippodrome or listening to dance music at the Palais de Danse. In any case, the general audience appears to have

strongly approved – Duke and his music received a “vociferous reception” – to the extent that Ellington can be said to have “conquered” Birmingham. The high expectations whipped up by *Melody Maker* before Duke’s arrival in the UK, along with his reception by the national press, also had an enormous impact regionally. Yet not all local critics enjoyed it. As such, this analysis of Duke Ellington’s reception from a local perspective makes a significant contribution – not only to an understanding of Duke Ellington music in particular but also in appreciating how African American jazz artists, and their syncopated music, were perceived and received outside the capital city.



THE SENSATION OF THE MIDLANDS.

1920s Advertisement for the Palais de Danse, Monument Road, Birmingham.

References

- i. This essay is a revision of that paper, and has been adapted especially with regard to the notes and references. I must take this opportunity to convey my thanks to all of the people who have helped me: to staff members at the Birmingham City Archives for their support; and to Ian Bradley for suggesting that I convert my paper into a *Blue Light* essay. No less thanks are due to Dr Patrick Olsen, the *Blue Light* editor, for all his support. Special thanks go to Quentin Bryar (DESUk Secretary) and, particularly, to Roger Boyes (DESUk Vice Chairman), for kindly sharing with me some interesting archive material about Duke Ellington's 1933 concerts. I would also like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their suggestions and comments. Last but not least, a special thank-you goes to Dean Bargh for editing and proofreading this essay before publication.
- ii. Dr Pedro Cravinho is a Senior Research Fellow at Birmingham Centre for Media and Cultural Research and the current Keeper of the Archives at the Faculty of Arts, Design and Media, Birmingham City University (BCU). As a Trustee for the National Jazz Archive (NJA), over the last three years he has worked towards the successful establishment of an NJA Satellite Collection at BCU (West Midlands).
- iii. One output of my original research on the history of jazz in Birmingham is the paper "A genius, a phoney, a true giant of jazz and the Mad Monk': The Thelonious Monk 1965 Birmingham tour revisited", delivered at the *Being Thelonious: Perspectives on Monk at 100* symposium, Birmingham City University, 15 June 2017.
- iv. As a member of the County Archive Research Network.
- v. Karen L. Ishizuca and Patricia Zimmerman, *Mining the Home Movie: Excavations in Histories and Memories* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2008), 19. For further critical discussion on the political and social implications of archives and museums, see, among others, Eric Foner, *Who Owns History? Rethinking the Past in a Changing World* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2003); Penelope Houston, *Keepers of the Frame: Film Archives* (London: BFI Publishing, 1994); and Susan A. Crane, ed., *Museums and Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).
- vi. Duke's first European tour taken as a whole is still waiting to be covered in any depth, and an article on the subject would be welcome to address this omission.
- vii. Catherine Tackley, "Art or debauchery? The reception of Duke Ellington in the UK", in John Howland, ed., *Duke Ellington Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 76-107. For further discussion on the reception of early jazz in Britain, see Catherine Tackley (née Parsonage), "A critical reassessment of the reception of early jazz in Britain", *Popular Music*, 22(3) (2003), 315-36.
- viii. Birmingham City Archives, Ref. MS1711.
- ix. Ibid.
- x. For example, the Jubilee Singers (announced as the "ex-slave singers of Fisk University") performed at Birmingham Town Hall on 26 February and 3 March 1874 (*Birmingham Mail*, 10 April 1874). For further discussion on Black musicians in Britain, see Paul Oliver, ed., *Black Music in Britain* (Milton Keynes and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1990).
- xi. Tackley, "Art or debauchery", 88.
- xii. For further discussion on this topic, see Martin Cloonan and Matt Brennan, "Alien invasions: The British Musicians' Union and foreign musicians," *Popular Music*, 32 (2013), 277-95.
- xiii. Howard Rye, "Visiting firemen 1: Duke Ellington," *Storyville*, 88 (April 1980): 130.
- xiv. For discussion about jazz in Manchester in a later period, see Bill Birch, *Keeper of the Flame; Modern Jazz in Manchester, 1946-1972* (Checkheaton: The Amadeus Press, 2010), about jazz in Bristol in later period, see David Hibberd, *Recollections of Jazz in Bristol - My Kind of Town* (Bristol: Doveton Press, 2000), and about the story of traditional jazz in Edinburgh, see Graham Blamire, *Edinburgh Jazz Enlightenment - The Story of Edinburgh Traditional Jazz* (Peterborough: Upfront Publishing, 2012).
- xv. For further discussion on this topic, see Jim Simpson and Ron Simpson, *Don't Worry 'bout the Bear: From the Blues to Jazz, Rock & Roll and Black Sabbath* (Studley: Brewin Books, 2019).
- xvi. For further discussion on Duke Ellington's 1933 UK tour, and the reconstruction of a detailed itinerary, see Rye, "Visiting firemen 1"; and Ken Vial, *The Life of Duke Ellington, 1927-1950 (Part One)* (Oxford: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 86. For a discussion on the reception of Duke Ellington at

- the London Palladium in 1933, see Chapter 9 of Catherine Tackley (née Catherine Parsonage), *The Evolution of Jazz in Britain, 1880–1935* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).
- xvii. For further discussion on the reception of the Duke Ellington Orchestra in the Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow press, see Tackley, “Art or debauchery”.
- xviii. For further discussion on this topic, see Tim Wall, “Duke Ellington, the meaning of jazz and the BBC in the 1930s”, in Roger Fagge and Nicolas Pillai, eds., *New Jazz Conceptions: History, Theory, Practice* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017).
- xix. The following snippets of information can be found. Howard Rye wrote: ‘17 Jul (for one week) Birmingham Hippodrome; 21 Jul After the Hippodrome performance, appeared at a dance date at the New Palais de Danse, Monument Road, Birmingham’ (“Visiting firemen 1”); and Ken Vial wrote: “Saturday 22 July 1933, Duke Ellington and his Orchestra close at the Hippodrome in Birmingham” (*The Life of Duke Ellington, 1927–1950* [Part One]).
- xx. Duke Ellington and his orchestra arrived in the UK on 12 June and departed on 24 July 1933 for the Continent to undertake a short tour. *Melody Maker*, 29 July 1933.
- xxi. A recording is held by the National Sound Archive, which was transcribed by Quentin Byar (DESUK) and published in *Blue Light*, 12(3) (Part 1) and 12(4) (Part 2).
- xxii. *Blue Light*, 12(3) (July/August/September 2005), 9.
- xxiii. Ibid.
- xxiv. For further discussion, see Tackley, *The Evolution of Jazz in Britain, 1880–1935*; and Jim Goldbolt, *A History of Jazz in Britain, 1919–1950* (4th ed.) (London: Northway Publication, 2010).
- xxv. *Melody Maker*, 10(4) (New Series), 17 June 1933.
- xxvi. The Birmingham Hippodrome was officially opened on 9 October 1899, by Councillor Marsh, and was first known as the Tower of Varieties and Circus. In the following year, the building was refurbished and on 20 August 1900 reopened as the Tivoli Theatre. In October 1903, it again changed its name, this time to the Hippodrome. For further discussion on the Birmingham Hippodrome, see Bill Slinn, *The History of the Birmingham Hippodrome* (Norwich: The Wensum Press, 1983).
- xxvii. *Birmingham Mail*, 20 June 1933.
- xxviii. *Birmingham Gazette*, 12 July 1933.
- xxix. *Birmingham Mail*, 14 July 1933.
- xxx. Ibid.
- xxxi. *Birmingham Gazette*, 15 July 1933.
- xxxii. *Birmingham Gazette*, 18 July 1933.
- xxxiii. Ibid.
- xxxiv. Ibid.
- xxxv. For further discussion on American vaudeville, see Nicholas Gebhardt, *Vaudeville Melodies: Popular Music and Mass Entertainment in American Culture, 1870–1929* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2017).
- xxxvi. Ibid. The *Birmingham Gazette* also published a photograph of Duke greeting a lady with a handshake, which was accompanied by the following caption: “Duke Ellington in Birmingham – Prior to commencing his stay in Birmingham at the Hippodrome, Duke Ellington, the famous jazz band conductor, received a warm welcome from an admirer.” *Birmingham Gazette*, 18 July 1933.
- xxxvii. *Birmingham Mail*, 18 July 1933
- xxxviii. Ibid.
- xxxix. *Birmingham Post*, 18 July 1933.
- xl. Ibid.
- xli. *Birmingham Mail*, 21 July 1933.
- xlii. The quotes not in italics are Ellington’s replies to the *Birmingham Mail* reporter.
- xliii. *Birmingham Mail*, 19 July 1933.
- xliv. For further discussion on the concept of “cultural translation”, see Boris Buden, Stefan Nowotny, Sherry Simon, Ashok Bery and Michael Cronin, “Cultural translation: An introduction to the problem, and responses”, *Translation Studies*, 2(2) (2009), 196–219.
- xlv. *Birmingham Gazette*, 20 July 1933.
- xlvi. *Birmingham Gazette*, 22 July 1933.
- xlvii. For a detailed discussion on dance bands, see Albert McCarthy, *The Dance Band Era: The Dancing Decades from Ragtime to Swing, 1910–1950* (Radnor, PA: Chilton Book Company, 1982). For a broader discussion on jazz and dance music, see Tackley, “Art or debauchery”.
- xlviii. Katherine Williams, “Post-World War II jazz in Britain: Venues and values 1945–1970”, *Jazz Research Journal*, 7(2) (2013), 113–31.

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