



Tuesday, December 1, 2015 at 8:00 p.m.
Dr. Bobbie Bailey & Family Performance Center, Morgan Hall
Fiftieth Concert of the 2015-16 Concert Season

Kennesaw State University Jazz Ensembles

JAZZ ENSEMBLE II

Wes Funderburk, director

Latino Lady | Sebesky

A Portrait of Jenny | arr. Larry McKenna

Cute | Neal Hefti

A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square | Sherwin | arr. Mantooth

Lean Baby | Billy May

Oye Como Va | Puente | arr. Mossman

JAZZ ENSEMBLE I

Sam Skelton, director

The Nutcracker Suite | Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky
arr. Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn

Overture

Toot Toot Tootie Toot

Peanut Brittle Brigade

Sugar Rum Cherry

Entr'acte

Volga Vouty

Chinoserie

Dance of the Floreadores

Arabesque Cookie

program notes

Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky was a Russian composer of the late-Romantic period, some of whose works are among the most popular music in the classical repertoire. He was the first Russian composer whose music made a lasting impression internationally, bolstered by his appearances as a guest conductor in Europe and the United States. Tchaikovsky was honored in 1884 by Emperor Alexander III, and awarded a lifetime pension.

Although musically precocious, Tchaikovsky was educated for a career as a civil servant. There was scant opportunity for a musical career in Russia at that time and no system of public music education. When an opportunity for such an education arose, he entered the nascent Saint Petersburg Conservatory, from which he graduated in 1865. The formal Western-oriented teaching he received there set him apart from composers of the contemporary nationalist movement embodied by the Russian composers of The Five, with whom his professional relationship was mixed. Tchaikovsky's training set him on a path to reconcile what he had learned with the native musical practices to which he had been exposed from childhood. From this reconciliation, he forged a personal but unmistakably Russian style—a task that did not prove easy. The principles that governed melody, harmony and other fundamentals of Russian music ran completely counter to those that governed Western European music; this seemed to defeat the potential for using Russian music in large-scale Western composition or from forming a composite style, and it caused personal antipathies that dented Tchaikovsky's self-confidence. Russian culture exhibited a split personality, with its native and adopted elements having drifted apart increasingly since the time of Peter the Great. This resulted in uncertainty among the intelligentsia about the country's national identity—an ambiguity mirrored in Tchaikovsky's career.

Despite his many popular successes, Tchaikovsky's life was punctuated by personal crises and depression. Contributory factors included his early separation from his mother for boarding school followed by his mother's early death, the death of his close friend and colleague Nikolai Rubinstein, and the collapse of the one enduring relationship of his adult life, which was his 13-year association with the wealthy widow Nadezhda von Meck. His same-sex orientation, which he kept private, has traditionally also been considered a major factor, though some musicologists now downplay its importance. Tchaikovsky's sudden death at the age of 53 is generally ascribed to cholera; there is an ongoing debate as to whether cholera was indeed the cause of death, or if it was accidental or self-inflicted.

While his music has remained popular among audiences, critical opinions were initially mixed. Some Russians did not feel it was sufficiently representative of native musical values and expressed suspicion that Europeans accepted the

music for its Western elements. In an apparent reinforcement of the latter claim, some Europeans lauded Tchaikovsky for offering music more substantive than base exoticism, and said he transcended stereotypes of Russian classical music. Others dismissed Tchaikovsky's music as "lacking in elevated thought," according to longtime New York Times music critic Harold C. Schonberg, and derided its formal workings as deficient because they did not stringently follow Western principles.

- *Wikipedia*

Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington (April 29, 1899 – May 24, 1974) was an American composer, pianist and bandleader of jazz orchestras. He led his orchestra from 1923 until his death, his career spanning over 50 years.

Born in Washington, D.C., Ellington was based in New York City from the mid-1920s onward, and gained a national profile through his orchestra's appearances at the Cotton Club in Harlem. In the 1930s, his orchestra toured in Europe. Though widely considered to have been a pivotal figure in the history of jazz, Ellington embraced the phrase "beyond category" as a liberating principle, and referred to his music as part of the more general category of American Music, rather than to a musical genre such as jazz.

Some of the musicians who were members of Ellington's orchestra, such as saxophonist Johnny Hodges, are considered to be among the best players in jazz. Ellington melded them into the best-known orchestral unit in the history of jazz. Some members stayed with the orchestra for several decades. A master at writing miniatures for the three-minute 78 rpm recording format, Ellington often composed specifically to feature the style and skills of his individual musicians.

Often collaborating with others, Ellington wrote more than one thousand compositions; his extensive body of work is the largest recorded personal jazz legacy, with many of his extant works having become standards. Ellington also recorded songs written by his bandsmen, for example Juan Tizol's "Caravan," and "Perdido," which brought a Spanish tinge to big band jazz. After 1941, Ellington collaborated with composer-arranger-pianist Billy Strayhorn, whom he called his writing and arranging companion. With Strayhorn, he composed many extended compositions, or suites, as well as additional short pieces. Following an appearance at the Newport Jazz Festival in July 1956, Ellington and his orchestra enjoyed a major career revival and embarked on world tours. Ellington recorded for most American record companies of his era, performed in several films, scoring several, and composed stage musicals.

Due to his inventive use of the orchestra, or big band, and thanks to his eloquence and charisma, Ellington is generally considered to have elevated the perception

of jazz to an art form on a par with other traditional musical genres. His reputation continued to rise after his death, and he was awarded a special Pulitzer Prize for music in 1999.

- *Wikipedia*

Billy Strayhorn (November 29, 1915 – May 31, 1967) was born in Dayton, Ohio. His family soon moved to the Homewood section of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Strayhorn spent many months of his childhood at his grandparents' house in Hillsborough. In an interview, Strayhorn said that his grandmother was his primary influence during the first ten years of his life. He first became interested in music while living with her, playing hymns on her piano, and playing records on her Victrola record player.

He met Duke Ellington in December 1938, after an Ellington performance in Pittsburgh (he had first seen Ellington play in Pittsburgh in 1933). Here he first told, and then showed, the band leader how he would have arranged one of Duke's own pieces. Ellington was impressed enough to invite other band members to hear Strayhorn. At the end of the visit, he arranged for Strayhorn to meet him when the band returned to New York. Strayhorn worked for Ellington for the next quarter century as an arranger, composer, occasional pianist and collaborator until his early death from cancer. As Ellington described him, "Billy Strayhorn was my right arm, my left arm, all the eyes in the back of my head, my brain waves in his head, and his in mine."

Strayhorn's relationship with Ellington was always difficult to pin down: Strayhorn was a gifted composer and arranger who seemed to flourish in Duke's shadow. Ellington was arguably a father figure and the band was affectionately protective of the diminutive, mild-mannered, unselfish Strayhorn, nicknamed by the band "Strays," "Weely," and "Swee' Pea." Ellington may have taken advantage of him, but not in the mercenary way that others had taken advantage of Ellington; instead, he used Strayhorn to complete his thoughts, while giving Strayhorn the freedom to write on his own and enjoy at least some of the credit he deserved. Though Duke Ellington took credit for much of Strayhorn's work, he did not maliciously drown out his partner. Ellington would make jokes onstage like, "Strayhorn does a lot of the work but I get to take the bows!"

Strayhorn composed the band's best known theme, "Take the 'A' Train," and a number of other pieces that became part of the band's repertoire. In some cases Strayhorn received attribution for his work such as "Lotus Blossom," "Chelsea Bridge," and "Rain Check," while others, such as "Day Dream" and "Something to Live For," were listed as collaborations with Ellington or, in the case of "Satin Doll" and "Sugar Hill Penthouse," were credited to Ellington alone. Strayhorn also arranged many of Ellington's band-within-band recordings and provided harmonic

clarity, taste, and polish to Duke's compositions. On the other hand, Ellington gave Strayhorn full credit as his collaborator on later, larger works such as *Such Sweet Thunder*, *A Drum Is a Woman*, *The Perfume Suite* and *The Far East Suite*, where Strayhorn and Ellington worked closely together. Strayhorn also often sat in on the piano with the Ellington Orchestra, both live and in the studio.

Detroit Free Press music critic Mark Stryker concludes that the work of Strayhorn and Ellington in *Anatomy of a Murder* is "indispensable, [although] ... too sketchy to rank in the top echelon among Ellington-Strayhorn masterpiece suites like *Such Sweet Thunder* and *The Far East Suite*, but its most inspired moments are their equal." Film historians have recognized the soundtrack "as a landmark -- the first significant Hollywood film music by African Americans comprising non-diegetic music, that is, music whose source is not visible or implied by action in the film, like an on-screen band." The score avoided the cultural stereotypes which previously characterized jazz scores and rejected a strict adherence to visuals in ways that presaged the New Wave cinema of the '60s."

In 1960 the two collaborated on the album *The Nutcracker Suite*, recorded for the Columbia label and featuring jazz interpretations of "The Nutcracker" by Tchaikovsky, arranged by the two. The original album cover is notable for the inclusion of Strayhorn's name and picture along with Ellington's on the front.

personnel

JAZZ ENSEMBLE II

SAXES

Andrew Ereddia
Molly Price
Deonski Rogers
Muhsin Quarashi
Nathan Hollis
Josh Inglis

TRUMPETS

Pablo Gonzalez
Miles Bonaker
Jeremy Perkins
Joshua Klann

TROMBONES

Andrew Pendleton
Gage Fisher
Sam Boeger

GUITARS

Robert Herrington
Jonathan Flores
Simon Needle

PIANO

Sarah Chari

BASS

Francisco Lora

DRUMS

Tyler Neal
Brooks Payne

JAZZ ENSEMBLE I

REEDS

Devin Okey
Brandon Radaker
Michael Opitz
Damontae Scott
Nic Chambers

TRUMPETS

Brandon Austin
Stacy Novik
Ben Scheile
Jesse Baker

TROMBONES

Michael DeSousa
George Blevins
Travis Longenberger
Devin Witt

RHYTHM

Brian Reid, piano
Zachary Wilson, piano
Patrick Arthur, guitar
Christian Artieda, guitar
Caleb Tokarska, guitar

Brandon Boone, bass
Janna Graham, drums
Jonathan Pace, drums
Jonathan Morningstar,
drums

biographies

Wes Funderburk has performed across the United States and Europe and is currently one of the most sought after trombonists and arrangers in Atlanta and the Southeast. He is the author of *Funderbone.net* and the inventor of *Blog Songs!* - his award-winning music blog and podcast.

Wes has written, performed, recorded with a wide array of national and internationally-renowned artists including Jennifer Holliday, Band of Horses, Spoon, Jermaine Dupri, Cee Lo, The Boston Brass, Natalie Cole, Dallas Austin, SoShy, Kelis, India Arie, Slide Hampton, Joe Gransden, The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and the Atlanta Pops Orchestra. He has also been a featured performer at The Atlanta Dogwood Festival, Atlanta Jazz Festival, Atlanta Black Arts Festival, Candler Park Festival, Inman Park Festival, Montreux-Atlanta Jazz Festival, Jacksonville Jazz Festival, Montreux Jazz Festival and North Sea Jazz Festival.

Jazz Ensembles and Jazz Arranging



Wes' recording credits include So So Def Records, Atlantic Records, Verve Records, Columbia Records, Universal Records, Arista Records, Giant Step Records, the *Cartoon Network* and the *Weather Channel*. His arranging credits include music for Russell Gunn's Krunk Jazz Orchestra, Jennifer Holliday, Ben van Dijk, Natalie Cole, Joe Gransden Big Band, The Georgia Brass Band, The Atlanta Jazz Orchestra, Kennesaw State University Jazz Ensemble, Georgia State University Jazz Ensemble and brass band, the Piedmont Trombone Society and the Tempest Little Big Band. Wes is also the leader and co-founder of "The Funderhorns" - a freelance commercial horn section that has recorded in some of the finest recording studios in the country.

As an educator, Wes has given clinics and master classes at University of Georgia, Francis Marion University, The University of North Florida, Georgia State University, Columbus State University (GA), the Mars Hill Low Brass Retreat, Tanglewood Music Camp and numerous high schools across the Southeast. He maintains an active private studio for students of all ages and is currently the low brass instructor at the Atlanta International School. In 2007, Wes joined the faculty at Kennesaw State University as a jazz band director and in 2010, joined the faculty at Georgia State University as visiting lecturer in jazz studies. Wes earned his Bachelor's Degree in trombone performance from the University of North Florida and his Masters' Degree in trombone performance with a concentration in jazz studies from Georgia State University.

Wes is a governor for the Atlanta chapter of the Recording Academy and a clinician and performing artist for Rath trombones and Facet Mutes.

Director of Jazz Studies and Senior Lecturer in Saxophone

Sam Skelton, a native of Conyers, Georgia, has been active on the Atlanta music scene for well over two decades. Skelton graduated summa cum laude from Georgia State University and the private studio of Tony Carere with a degree in Jazz Studies.

During his course of study at GSU, Skelton was a Montgomery Music Scholar and a two-time fellowship recipient to the Aspen Music Festival. He continued his saxophone studies with Kenneth Radnofsky at Boston University in 1991.

As a woodwind doubler, Skelton is well versed in any genre of music. His grasp of saxophone, clarinet and flute has enabled him to remain very busy in live performance as well as in the studio.

Skelton has performed and/or soloed with The London Symphony Orchestra, The Atlanta Symphony, The Atlanta Pops, The Peachtree Pops, The Atlanta Ballet Orchestra and The Cobb Symphony Orchestra as well as numerous local high

school and civic ensembles. World Premieres include James Oliverio's *Children of A Common Mother*, Lee Johnson's *Ora Pro Mi: Concerto for Winds Soloist* (clarinet, flute and soprano saxophone) and *Seaside Symphony* (clarinet and soprano saxophone soloist). Skelton also played the premier recording of *Ora Pro Mi* and *Seaside Symphony* with the London Symphony Orchestra.

As a sideman on over 175 compact discs, Skelton remains very active in the studio and can be heard on recordings by such artists as: Elton John, December Radio, Babbie Mason, Howard Tate, Matchbox 20, Train, Edwin McCain, The Gap Band and The Ohio Players. Television and radio jingles include *The Georgia Lottery*,

Glen Beck, *The Weather Channel*, *The Travel Channel*, *Ford*, *The Cartoon Network*, *CNN*, *Nature's Own*, *Popeye's*, *Papa John's* and *Turner South*. Television appearances include *In the Heat of the Night*, *Savannah* and Sinbad's *Summer Jam II* on HBO.

Skelton is currently Director of Jazz Studies and Lecturer in Saxophone at Kennesaw State University. He is also Artistic Director of CSO Jazz and GYSO Jazz. Skelton served as Professor of Saxophone at Georgia State University from 1991 to 2004 and was Jazz Ensemble Director at Georgia Tech from 2002-2004 and Artist-in-Residence at The University of Georgia Jazz Department. He served as Visiting Professor of Saxophone at Furman University 2001-2002. Professional associations include: Georgia Music Educators Association, Georgia Association of Jazz Educators, National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences (voting member) and the American Federation of Musicians. Skelton is a Conn-Selmer Artist.



about the school of music



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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen W. Plate". The signature is fluid and cursive.


Stephen W. Plate, DMA
Director, School of Music
Kennesaw State University

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