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FRANK DRIGGS COLLECTION
OF DUKE ELLINGTON PHOTOGRAPHIC REFERENCE PRINTS, 1923-1972
(.2 cu. ft.; 3 Notebooks)

Biography

Frank Driggs (1930- ), born in Bennington, VT, earned a degree in International Relations at Princeton University and worked in film distribution before moving to New York City in 1955. He first became well known to music fans as a writer of mainly historical profiles of pre-World War II bands for such publications as Coda, Jazz Monthly, and Jazz Journal in the late '50s. From 1960-66, Driggs produced jazz, blues, and folk recordings at Columbia Records. He also worked as a producer at RCA from 1967-77, after which he worked as a freelance producer until 1982. A colleague of John Hammond's at Columbia, he produced recordings by such artists as Earl “Fatha” Hines, Pee Wee Russell, Son House, and Meg Wells. Driggs also worked on reissue projects involving recordings of Louis Armstrong, Fletcher Henderson, Jack Teagarden, Joe Venuti and Eddie Lang. In the 1970s, Driggs oversaw the remastering of bluesman Robert Johnson’s pivotal 1930's recordings, which, when finally reissued in 1990, went platinum and continue to sell steadily.

Driggs first collected photographs and other memorabilia to illustrate his writing. The images in the Frank Driggs Collection come from many sources, including musicians and their families, photographers (both working and retired), photo agencies, record companies, other collectors and even flea markets. It was not until the mid-1970s that revenue reached a point where Driggs realized he had a viable business in picture sales. Since 1982, Driggs has devoted himself exclusively to selling photographs from his collection of approximately 100,000 images. Driggs showcased some of his treasures in his 1982 book, Black Beauty, White Heat. For the first time, in 1995, he published a 24-page catalog of the Frank Driggs Collection.

Scope and Content

The Frank Driggs Collection of Duke Ellington Photographic Reference Prints consists of one-hundred-fifty-seven black and white photographic prints of Duke Ellington, the Ellington Orchestra and band members, family members and friends, and colleagues. The photographs document Duke Ellington’s career as a composer, performer and band leader between 1923 and 1972. The photographs are housed in three notebooks, organized into twelve catagories (e.g., band members, candid shots, Ellington with friends, etc.), and arranged sequentially by negative number. Among the highlights in the Driggs Collection are images of the band broadcasting...

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from the BBC in London during its first European tour in 1933, Duke Ellington and Django Reinhardt celebrating the opening of the Hot Club of France in 1939, and Ellington’s last sacred concert, held in Toronto in 1972.

NOTE: The Archives Center does not own the rights to the photographs from the Driggs Collection. All requests for permission to use these photographs for non-museum purposes must be addressed directly to Frank Driggs at (718) 338-2245.

Provenance

The Frank Driggs Collection of Duke Ellington Photographic Reference Prints was loaned to the National Museum of American History by Mr. Driggs on November 8, 1990. Copy prints and negatives were made by the Smithsonian Institution’s Office of Photographic Print Services and the original images were returned to Mr. Driggs on August 2, 1991.
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Container List

Notebook #1

BAND MEMBERS

15. Joe Nanton, Juan Tizol, Lawrence Brown, 1933.

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17 Ellington Saxes, Billy Taylor, Hayes Alvis, 1936.
18 Wallace Jones, Barney Bigard, Joe Nanton -- Neptune Park; Sioux Falls, SD; July 17, 1939.
19 Ellington Saxes, undated.
20 Rex Stewart, Cootie Williams, Barney Bigard, Joe Nanton, Johnny Hodges, Juan Tizol -- Savoy Ballroom, New York, 1940.
21 Barney Bigard, Johnny Hodges -- private railroad car, 1940.
22 Sonny Greer -- private railroad car, 1940.
23 Ben Webster, Otto Hardwicke, Harry Carney, Freddy Guy, 1940.
25 Joe Nanton, Juan Tizol, Lawrence Brown, Ben Webster, Chauncey Haughton, Otto Hardwicke, Johnny Hodges, Harry Carney -- Lakeside Park, Denver, 1942.
31 Johnny Hodges, Russell Procope -- Newport Jazz Festival; Newport, RI; July 1956.

CANDID SHOTS

1 Duke Ellington, Harry Carney, Sonny Greer, Ivie Anderson, 1940.
2 Duke Ellington, Ivie Anderson, Harry Lin -- Colgate University Prom, 1940.
3 Duke Ellington, Jimmy Blanton -- Colgate University, 1940.
4 Duke Ellington, 1946.
5 Joe Nanton, Ivie Anderson, 1930s.
7 Joe Nanton, Barney Bigard, Johnny Hodges, Freddy Guy, Billy Taylor, undated.
8 Otto Hardwicke, Rex Stewart, Ivie Anderson, Sonny Greer, 1936.

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Bill Bailey, Sonny Greer, Bessie Dudley, Otto Hardwicke, 1933.

ELLINGTON AT THE PIANO

1  Duke Ellington -- Boston, 1933.
2  Duke Ellington at recording date, 1937.
4-9a Duke Ellington – Randall’s Island Jam Session, New York, 1938.
13 Duke Ellington -- Carnegie Hall, 1945 or 46.
16 Duke Ellington, undated.
18 Duke Ellington -- Toronto, undated.

Notebook #2

ELLINGTON CONDUCTING


ELLINGTON WITH FRIENDS

3  Duke Ellington, unidentified, 1934.
4-7 Duke Ellington -- L.M. Schmidlapp-Lunken Airport, Cincinnati,OH, undated.
9  Duke Ellington and friend escorted to ballroom, c. 1933.
10 Duke Ellington, 5 unidentified women, undated.
11 Duke Ellington, unidentified group, June 1930.

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Baker, Al Sears -- Hurricane Club, New York, 1943.
5 Duke Ellington -- Hurricane Club, New York, 1943.
7 Betty Roche -- Hurricane Club, New York, 1943.
8 Duke Ellington, undated.
15 Ellington Orchestra -- Newport Jazz Festival; Newport, RI; July 1, 1956.

Notebook #3

INTERNATIONAL TOURS

1 Duke Ellington broadcasts from the British Broadcasting Company (first European tour) -- London, 1933.
1a Joe Nanton, Barney Bigard - BBC, London, 1933.
1b Freddie Jenkins, Lawrence Brown, Cootie Williams, Juan Tizol - BBC, London, 1933.
1c Otto Hardwicke, Barney Bigard, Johnny Hodges -- BBC, London, 1933.
5 Outdoor concert -- Paris, 1950

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Stockholm, c. 1974

ORCHESTRA

1. Wilbur Sweatman Orchestra, March 5, 1923
3. Undated.
5. Undated.
11. (L-R) Cootie Williams, Lawrence Brown, Wellman Brud, Johnny Hodges, Arthur Whetsol, Joe Nanton, Otto Hardwicke, Bill Bailey, Freddy Guy, Freddie Jenkins, Duke Ellington, Derby Wilson, Harry Carney, Juan Tizol, Louis Bacon, Sonny Greer, Earl Tucker -- Dallas, TX, 1933.
18. (L-R) Freddie Jenkins, Joe Nanton, Cootie Williams, Juan Tizol, Arthur Whetsol, Duke Ellington, Sonny Greer, Harry Carney, Freddy Guy, Johnny Hodges,

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Wendall Braud, Barney Bigard -- Oriental Theater, Chicago, 1931.
21 Duke Ellington rehearsing for recording session, undated.

PUBLICITY

1 Duke Ellington, 1932.
2 Duke Ellington, 1936.
4 Duke Ellington, 1937.
7 Duke Ellington, c. 1945-6.
8 Duke Ellington, undated.
9 Advertisement for Small=s engagement, undated.
10 Advertisement for *Black and Tan*, undated.
11 Advertisement for London Palladium show, June 1933.
12 Marquee -- Brooklyn Paramount Theater, 1932.
15-16 Ellington Orchestra publicity photo for *Murder at the Vanities*, 1934.
19 Duke Ellington on RKO lot, 1930.
20 Ellington musicians and actors, *Black and Tan Fantasy* (RKO short), 1929.
23 Advertisement -- Cotton Club, New York, undated.

SACRED CONCERT


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