Bob Matthews

...AND ALL THAT JAZZ

Washington, D.C. has designated the month of April for what is being called a "Duke Ellington International Festival."

Edward Kennedy Ellington was born in D.C. April 29, 1899, and thus far, most of the radio stations in the area have dedicated hours of programming to the music of the Duke.

Saturday, April 18, there will be an Ellington Piano Concert sponsored by the Charlin Jazz Society at 8 p.m. in the Duke Ellington School of the Arts, 3500 R St., NW, Washington, D.C.

Performing will be the gifted pianist and composer, **Stanley Cowell,** who will interpret Ellington compositions.

Sunday, April 19, there will be an Ellington salute at the One Step Down, 2517 Penn. Ave., NW, and featured will be the **Steve Novosel Quartet.** For further information, (202) 331-8863.

Tuesday, April 21 at 8 p.m., the Smithsonian Resident Associates Program presents the esteemed **Gunther Schuller** in a musical lecture.

Schuller will trace Ellington's life from his childhood in D.C. to his stint at the Cotton Club and beyond.

It will be held in the Hirshorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Independence Ave. and Seventh St., SW, beginning at 8 p.m. Further information, (202) 357-3030.

Moon August

Here at home, am happy to report that **Gary Bartz** is back in place at the Jazz Closet, following an extended tour in St. Thomas, V.I. He's looking tanned and fit.

Got a chance to chat with him for a bit, and he informed me that he is involved in putting on a jazz festival in St. Thomas this August 10-16.

'Course things are still in the formative stage at this point in time, but there will be a complete package when things jell, including air fare, hotels and fest admissions. Will keep you informed.

— —

While we're on the subject of festivals, the Left Bank Jazz Society is busy making plans for a festival to be held this August at Oregon Ridge.

Of course there are an awfully lot of variables which have to be resolved before this fest comes to fruition, but LBJSers are hopeful that all of the problems can be ironed out.

Wish them luck, but can't help but feel that they were a little late getting started on such a huge project, but if it doesn't come off this year — there's always next year.

Dropped into the LBJS concert last Sunday where **Johnny Griffin** showed he hasn't slowed down one whit. 'Twas really a beautiful session, and if you missed it — shame on you.

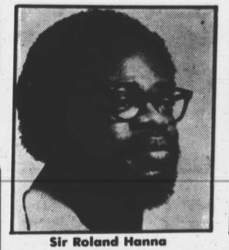
Was asked several times about the group **OTB, Out of the Blue,** which is the next attraction for LBJS — they'll be on hand April 26.

Actually, the group is a concoction put together by Blue Note Records, or as it is now called, Manhattan Blue Note.

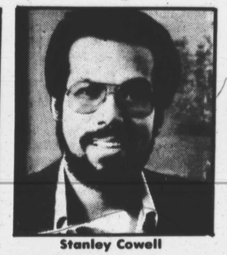
When the label became active again in the jazz recording field, they did one of the things which made the label famous during the 50s and 60s.

They put out the word that auditions would be held for a new group to be formed — an acoustic group, capable of the hard bop sound pioneered by Blue Note and best exemplified by the Jazz Messengers work.

If you go back to the VeeJay label things, wherein **Lee Morgan, Frank Strozier, Wayne Shorter,** and others were featured, you get the idea of the kind of sound this group performs.



Sir Roland Hanna



Stanley Cowell

Rudy Van Gelder, really the creator of that Blue Note sound, would do the engineering on this recording of the group, and after being picked, put together, rehearsed — the first album was released in 1985.

It was an instant hit — those youngsters sounded like a version of the Blakey Messengers, and swung to a fare-the-well.

The name of that album was — strangely enough — OTB, and it is available. Now, they have issued their second recording, and it's available on CD as well as analog recordings.

At any rate, this is the group that will be at the Coppin State College Tawes Center for Left Bank on April 26 at 5 p.m.

Can remember when LBJS was holding its sessions at the Famous Ballroom, and a group would be booked which was not necessarily a household word.

My response then remains today: if LBJS booked them — it's worth going to hear. They haven't steered me wrong yet . . . er, well . . . hardly ever.

— —

Alas, once again, there is a conflict, for on April 26, the Central Pennsylvania Friends of Jazz will be holding its monthly concert.

Featured artist will be **Sir Roland Hanna** and the **New York Jazz Quartet,** which this time features **Jerry Dodgion,** reeds; **Clint Houston,** bass, and **Billy Hart,** drums.

And, prior to the concert, at 4 p.m., the **Camp Hill High School Jazz Band** will be presented.

CPFOJ regularly gives area high school jazz bands a chance to perform at its sessions, which is a real step in keeping the youngsters interested in jazz.

— —

For those who have inquired about the Hampton Jazz Festival this year, it takes place June 26-28 and will feature the following artists:

Friday, June 26 — **Ray Charles, Sarah Vaughan, Wynton Marsalis** and **Stanley Jordan.**

Saturday, June 26 — **Freddie Jackson, The Crusaders, Phyllis Hyman, Stan Getz.**

Sunday, June 28 — **Gladys Knight and the Pips, Grover Washington, Jr.,** and the **Neville Brothers.**

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R. B. Jones

On Stage

Did a war weary world in 1947, that had seen the atrocities that modern technology and ancient evil impulses lurking in some heart could wreak on the earth, need a wistful, idealistic love story about escape from the 20th Century? The answer is yes.

Does that same yearning apply to today's world? Yes. "Brigadoon" was the whimsical musical that applied to salve of love and innocence to the war wounds in the late 1940s on Broadway and Fells Point Dinner Theater has brought "Brigadoon" to a Baltimore stage once more to beat back cynicism and world weariness with a good old fashioned musical about sacrificing everything for love.

One is immersed in the mythical Scottish highland town from the beginning. A man in Scottish costume greets the patron at the door and welcomes you with an approprite brogue.

Fells Point even created a Highland Mist concoction for the play that looked like a frozen daquiri and contained Scotch whiskey.

Since this reviewer is iron-willed and always sober when reviewing, I passed on the Mist. Of course the whiskey present wasn't the only intoxicant. "Brigadoon" is completely beyond plausability, corny and the kind of story tht modern thinking people would dismiss, but it is intoxicating.

Two highly successful New Yorkers go on a hunting trip in the Scottish highlands, become lost and, then see Brigadoon which is not on their maps. Tommy Allbright is intrigued. He is a success in the modern sense of the word but he feels that something is sorely missing from his life.

He is engaged, but not in love. His companion Jeff Douglass is a cynical, drunken modern man who believes in nothing, but his bottle.

They happen into the village on the wedding day of Jean Maclaren and Charlie Dalrymple. Tommy falls in love with Jean's sister Fiona and Jeff is hotly pursued by Meg the town "Hot Number."

Everyone in the town is happy about the wedding except Harry Beaton who loves Jean also. He is the town outcast and in a sense he is a malcontent in a town that will disappear forever if one of its residents leaves it.

Since there is a limited number of residents and people living in the town are trapped with each other indefinitely, it is understandable that Harry would not want to see Jean living blissfully with Charlie.

Harry's discontent and his attempt to leave Brigadoon has tragic results for him.

At the end of the day Tommy must decide whether to give up everything for Fiona and stay in Brigadoon or return to his century and all that he knows.

He leaves but returns months later to awaken Fiona and Mr. Lundie, the school master. Tommy chooses love with Fiona over the allurements of the 20th Century. It's not believeable in the cynical 1980s and it was not a believeable story in the 1940s when the show first appeared. But it is a seductive notion, living simply and blissfully while nasty subjects like terrorism and environmental damage and nuclear war pass you by.

The cast is strong in this show from top to bottom. The choreography was beautiful and appeared authentic to these untutored eyes. I especially enjoyed a sword dance at the wedding scene and a beautiful duet done with a partition by Diane Kelber Guillory and Ray Myers.

The singing was excellent, especially Christopher Moyer and Marqurite Shannon as Tommy and Fiona.

Fells Point Dinner Theater's production of "Brigadoon" is what dinner theater is all about, food, drink and a play one can understand without a Ph.D. in theater and songs that one can hum after leaving the show.

By the way, if you've never heard bagpipes in person you'll get a real treat.

'Run For Your Wife': Lots of fluff — little to hold on to

Ever have one of those situations when you know a person reminds you of someone, but you just can't think of who?

Well, it happened when we went to see the opening of "Run For Your Wife" at the Mechanic Theatre last week, and the character played by Bob Dishy gave us fits.

Finally, it dawned — his mannerisms, speech patterns and all the rest were totally reminiscent of Stan Laurel, of the comedy team of Laurel and Hardy.

This might give you a clue as to the laid back nature of the performance given by Dishy, who portrayed the character John Smith.

Smith, has two wives — a practicing bigamist, if you will. He is a London cab driver, who arranges to work two full shifts — one day, one night.

This gives him a chance — as long as he keeps his schedules straight — to be a husband to both wives on a regular basis.

And you know this leads to a lot of double entendre jokes. And that's what this farce is all about — humor. The play is funny — I mean belly laugh, guffaw-type funny. No sooner have you got your breath back from one exhaustive laugh when another springs right up.

But, this might be one of the flaws of the play. While it is extremely funny — it is light on substance — lots of fluff, but little to hold on to.

The storyline concerns the foibles of John Smith, who has been placidly carrying on two simultaneous marriages, keeping both women happy, on a regular schedule.

One day, he rushes to the defense of a lady in the park who was attacked by muggers, and she clobbers him with her handbag, thinking he is one of the thugs.

In his dazed condition, he suffers a near concussion, he winds up at the wrong house at the wrong time — and the plot thickens.

The set for this production consists of a single stagewide room, which has separate doors and windows, even different wallpaper, giving the illusion of two separate flats (apartments).

The opening scene has the two wives, each in her own flat, which has in-common furniture, but each is totally unaware of the other. A delightful premise which really works.

The play was written by Ray Cooney, who has over 30 plays to his credit which have played on the London stage.

In fact, there is a London company of "Run For Your Wife" which has been on the London stage for five years, and is still running.

Bob Dishy is thoroughly at home in his role as the bigamist, as is Ted Bessell as his friend and neighbor.

Both have the facility to milk every chuckle from the scripted material — and do so — magnificently.

Lea Floden is the animated first wife of Smith, whose sense of frustration in the later episodes simply explodes in energetic disbelief.

All in all, this is a delightful production, and although slated for Broadway, faces tough sledding, since British drawing room comedy has not always succeeded on the Broadway stage.

A little judicious editing, might well serve in good stead in readying a Broadway production.

But, for an evening of delightful theatre, one in which you don't want to tax your brain — just your funnybone — then this is the one.

It will be in place at the Mechanic Theatre through May 2. For further information, (301) 625-1400. — BOB MATTHEWS.

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