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**“Art or Debauchery?”:**

*The Reception of Ellington in the UK*

**Catherine Tackley**

In a 1952 *Downbeat* article, Duke Ellington chose his opening night at the London Palladium as one of his “10 Top Thrills in 25 Years,” and commented that “the entire first European tour in 1933 was a tremendous uplift for all our spirits.”[[1]](#footnote-1) Certainly, the reviews of Ellington’s initial performances in the UK were generally positive, which was definitely not the case with Louis Armstrong and Cab Calloway, who each visited around the same time. However, 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. This chapter explores the impact of Duke Ellington in the UK, focussing on his 1933 tour of the country, his 1948 appearances without his orchestra, his performances at the Royal Festival Hall and the Leeds Festival in 1958, and, finally, the three Sacred Concerts which were staged in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s.[[2]](#footnote-2) These performances, which span Ellington’s career, took place in a range of performance situations and across different regions of the UK. While the artistic inspiration that global touring offered to Ellington has been considered elsewhere,[[3]](#footnote-3) this chapter will explore the British reception of Ellington’s developing musical style and his influence on the British jazz community during this forty-year period, contributing to the growing knowledge and understanding of the attitudes to jazz in different periods, places, and situations.

**The 1933 Tour**

Duke Ellington and his orchestra arrived in the UK on 12 June 1933, and departed for the continent on 24 July of the same year. The group was resident at variety halls in London, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Glasgow, and also played Sunday concerts (a concert was the only form of entertainment legally permitted to take place on Sundays in Britain at this time) and late night dances at other venues. They broadcasted on the BBC and recorded for Decca in London. Given the number of engagements and the distances involved, it is hard to imagine that the musicians would have agreed with Irving Mills’s initial assertion that “the proposed trip is more in the nature of a holiday … a break and a change of scenery.”[[4]](#footnote-4) Despite the considerable demographic differences between the cities visited on the tour, research using local newspapers illuminates a relatively consistent and positive attitude to Ellington across the country. One reason for this was the degree of advance publicity which his visit received, meaning that critics and audience alike had a good idea of what to expect. Ellington had been anticipated in the trade press for at least seven months prior to his arrival, and new details of the tour were confirmed in *Melody Maker* each subsequent month.[[5]](#footnote-5) The British musician and critic Spike Hughes was able to play a significant role in the build-up to Ellington’s appearances. Hughes published accounts of his experiences in America in *Melody Maker*, the foremost British music trade periodical, and one of these articles included a description of Ellington performing at the Cotton Club.[[6]](#footnote-6) The day after Ellington’s arrival, and in anticipation of the band’s BBC broadcast, an article by Hughes entitled “Meet the Duke” was published in the *Daily Herald*, one of the best selling daily newspapers in Britain at the time.[[7]](#footnote-7)

The consistency in language between many British reviews and a contemporary advertising manual issued around this time illuminates the role of Mills in ensuring that the British press was well briefed.[[8]](#footnote-8) Mills was probably also involved in a piece supposedly written by Ellington which was published in *Rhythm* magazine just prior to his arrival. Related coverage included subsequent features in the trade press “written by” individual musicians from the band, as well as numerous tie-ups with instrument manufacturers and record shops, the most enterprising of which has to be Ellington’s endorsement of haggis in Glasgow.[[9]](#footnote-9) Of particular interest is Mills’s insistence that Ellington should be presented as “a great artist, a music genius whose unique style and individual theories of harmony have created a new music.”[[10]](#footnote-10) Much of the early British writing on jazz shares the common feature of the use of classical music to provide the criteria against which jazz was evaluated.[[11]](#footnote-11) Although the importance of individual improvising musicians was increasingly recognized in British criticism (especially in Stanley Nelson’s 1934 book, *All About Jazz*, which includes comparative discussion of different British and American musicians), there was still a tendency to look towards composers to improve the basic material upon which jazz was built. This idea is carried through specifically in early British writing on Ellington in which he is identified as “the first genuine composer of jazz,” and “the first jazz composer of distinction, and the first Negro composer of distinction.”[[12]](#footnote-12) Although the individual musicians of Ellington’s band were introduced to the British public in numerous articles and programs, Hughes tended to adhere to the conventional idea of the subservience of the performers to the composer: “There is not a note which comes from the remarkable brass section, of from that rich tone of the saxes, that is not directly an expression of Duke’s genius.”[[13]](#footnote-13) While the cognoscenti – headed by Hughes and the British composer and critic Constant Lambert – had specific expectations of Ellington’s performances, many others drew more readily upon their general experiences of dance or jazz bands in specific performance settings – in variety entertainment, on the radio, in the dance hall, and in concert. To a large extent, Ellington’s initial reception in Britain was dependent on how he conformed to, subverted, or revolutionized the conventions of these performance contexts.

**Variety Shows**

In 1933, Ellington and his band spent most of their time in Britain performing as an individual act in larger variety theater shows, where they were generally well-received. Dance bands had been appearing on the British variety stage for many years and there were clear audience expectations of this type of “act,” as the bandleader Jack Hylton noted in an article for the *Radio Times*: “Scenic backgrounds and artistic effects are useful to a stage band, but easy good humour and a fair leavening of comedy is a necessity, because no music-hall audience can be kept serious for a long time without signs of restiveness. They pay to be entertained.”[[14]](#footnote-14) Ellington and his band appeared at the Palladium alongside acts such as skating, juggling, comedy, Arab acrobatics, patter dialogue, ventriloquism, a football match on bicycles, and the risqué comedian Max Miller. With this context in mind, it is unsurprising that Hughes felt the need to point out in the *Daily Herald* that Ellington’s “is not a ‘show’ band; its members do not wear funny hats, nor do they attempt any ‘comedy.’”[[15]](#footnote-15) However, Ellington was clearly well prepared for the variety halls with the inclusion of vocalist Ivie Anderson, Bessie Dudley (“The Original Snake-Hips Girl”), and tap dancers Bill Bailey and Derby Wilson in the touring group. These additional entertainers contributed visual interest to the band’s performances.[[16]](#footnote-16) Predictably, knowledgeable critics disapproved of these aspects of the performances which seemed “to be so unnecessary as they detracted from the performances of the band.” Although the quality of Anderson’s performances was acknowledged, she too “seemed to interfere with the band.” Moreover, *Melody Maker*’s correspondent (probably Hughes) was frustrated that the band had to play stop-times for the tap dancing.[[17]](#footnote-17) Lambert commented similarly that “It is a little irritating to see them [the band] reduced to a subordinate role for the sake of a cabaret turn.”[[18]](#footnote-18)

Most other reviews tended to comment on the singing, dancing, and visual aspects of the act rather than the band’s performance. Such writings often carefully noted various non-musical details, such as in their first week at the Palladium when the band wore light grey tail suits, and in the second, white tail coats with green trousers. Certainly, the visual effect must have been stunning, but such elements were crucially paired with the highest musical standards, as the *Evening Standard* reported on the opening night at the Palladium:

There are subdued lights and monstrous shadows. His jazz drummer has the flamboyance of a cocktail mixer. His trumpeters abandon themselves in a frenzy. Yet, stripped of all its ornamentation, his band has great technical skill, and under his direction carries jazz to a high degree of syncopation and “hot” rhythm.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Vital to the audiences’ acceptance of “frenzied” trumpeters was the perception of Ellington as an effortless showman who was in control of all aspects of the performance: “The calm, collected Ellington, [was] sitting at the piano, playing and directing his mighty band, without any ostensible effort whatever.”[[20]](#footnote-20) There are two contextual points to be made here. Firstly, Ellington’s visit followed hot on the heels of Armstrong (who also appeared at the Palladium), whose stage presence many Britons considered to be excessive. Secondly, the prominent style of dance band directing at the time was noticeable exertion with a baton; in comparison, Ellington’s direction must have appeared almost magical. An editorial in *Rhythm* magazine admired Ellington’s “Whispering Tiger,” the antithesis of many British performances of the early jazz standard “Tiger Rag” (which was introduced to Britain by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band), noting: “Never have I heard men play so perfectly together, with such thorough understanding and so perfectly effortless.”[[21]](#footnote-21)

The reaction in some of the national newspapers was more muted than the specialist publications: “In short, a very good dance band, playing ingeniously orchestrated music. I do not pretend to appreciate its merits to the point of fashionable ecstasy; but I like it – as a dance band.”[[22]](#footnote-22) Similarly, the Liverpool papers in particular referred to Ellington’s performance as a “stunt,” albeit an effective one, showing how in a variety context Ellington appeared to be just the latest novelty: “It is a highly stylised, hy[p]er-sophisticated stunt, staged with a subtly satirical modernistic setting, and put over with the last ounce of showmanship.”[[23]](#footnote-23) Although the basic format of Ellington’s performance broadly conformed to the expectations of a variety show act, the obvious differences between the sound of Ellington’s band and British dance orchestras meant that for some the music was virtually incomprehensible: “as fascinating and inexplicable as a congress of ship’s sirens, motor horns and pneumatic drills in the majority of his numbers, and sublimely beautiful in *Mood Indigo*.”[[24]](#footnote-24) For the reviewer in the *Glasgow Evening News*, Ellington’s performance went beyond all expectations of a dance band: “Ellington has carried syncopation to subtleties which the popular little Lancashire lad [Hylton] has never risked. Curiously enough, the gramophone has not conveyed much of this band’s virtuosity. You have to sit before it to grasp the multitude of sounds that its instruments can achieve.”[[25]](#footnote-25) Even for fans of Ellington’s music, the experience of hearing the band live was considerably more intense in comparison with recordings: “You all know how Ellington’s band plays through listening to his records, and I can only say that in the flesh, it is like that, only a thousand times more so. It literally lifts one out of one’s seat.”[[26]](#footnote-26) However, due to familiarity with his recordings, the experience of hearing Ellington live was unsettling for some: “I came across to England to hear Ellington, and I returned, severely doubting the genius that had been attributed to him. Long after midnight, however, I played over five of his records, of my own choosing, and retired to bed – reassured.”[[27]](#footnote-27)

With all the advance publicity in *Rhythm* and *Melody Maker*, it is not surprising that many musicians and jazz fans, such as Nelson, reacted ecstatically to the performances:

How to describe in so many words the most vital, emotional experience that vaudeville in England has ever known? An orgy of masochism, a ruthless exercise in sensuality … it mined deep the fundamentals of every human in that multitudinous audience … Here was music far removed from the abracadabra of the symphony; here was a tenuous melodic line which distilled from the emotions all heritage of human sorrow which lies deep in every one of us.[[28]](#footnote-28)

Many of those who were most familiar with Ellington’s work were critical of his choice of repertoire for the Palladium shows, which was perceived to be overly commercial.[[29]](#footnote-29) There was, however, overwhelming consensus about the quality of “Mood Indigo,” which Ellington used to close his performances. The reviewer in the *Liverpool Evening Express* referred to this number as “Blue Indigo,” a “captivating waltz tune.”[[30]](#footnote-30) This error belies the appreciation of “Mood Indigo” as a new type of “sweet” number still beloved in Britain and typified by the waltz, but yet the distinctive orchestration and blues basis also rendered this acceptable to more discerning listeners. Similarly, overall, Ellington managed to achieve performances which conformed to the British idea of a “band act,” fulfilling the demand for novel but yet good quality entertainment.

**Broadcasts**

Ellington broadcast a very brief interview with Jack Hylton on BBC radio on the evening of his arrival in Britain, but his main opportunity to reach the whole nation came a few days later. There were high expectations surrounding this broadcast, which would have had an impact on potential provincial audiences who had not yet been able to hear the band in person. In fact, the broadcast had the most controversial reception of all Ellington’s activities in 1933, as exemplified by the reaction published in the *Manchester Guardian* the following day:

There are those who make a cult of “hot” music and think that its opponents misunderstand it, but when all arguments are finished it is surely true to say that something that is thoroughly ugly from start to finish is fairly to be opposed. Even if the “music” would be more bearable if the words were not so stupid and if the ideas which exist vaguely behind it were not so pathetically crude.[[31]](#footnote-31)

Similarly, Nelson claimed in his “Art or Debauchery” article that “with just one exception, every layman I have questioned concerning the Ellington broadcast disliked it.”[[32]](#footnote-32) Such strong reactions to a broadcast might seem surprising, but it should be remembered that the BBC had pursued a policy of broadcasting tightly regulated “dance music” since its inception. Indeed, the over-riding BBC policy on jazz and popular music remained constant, fuelled by the recent appointment of Henry Hall as the director of the BBC Dance Band. Executives hoped Hall would maintain a suitably controlled version of popular music, within which jazz was usually subsumed. With this in mind, it is maybe not surprising that in the “Radio Reports” column of *Melody Maker*, the main criticism of Ellington’s broadcast was that “the arrangements seemed too heavy and complicated for the air, there was so much going on all at once that this was difficult to sort it out.”[[33]](#footnote-33) Indeed, the critic for the *Yorkshire Observer* commented “Duke Ellington I suffered for 15 min. and then switched off. Give me Henry Hall every time.”[[34]](#footnote-34)

In March 1933, just a couple of months before Ellington’s visit, two significant articles on jazz appeared in a special “Dance Music” issue of the *Radio Times*, the BBC’s magazine. Lawrence Duval’s article, entitled “The Genesis of Jazz,” traces the black origins of jazz through folk music, minstrelsy, ragtime, and (unusually for British writing at this time) the blues.[[35]](#footnote-35) Lambert developed his article “The Future of Highbrow Jazz” for his 1934 book *Music Ho!*[[36]](#footnote-36) Given that the *Radio Times* was often used to support the BBC’s programming decisions, it seems likely that the inclusion of these articles was to prepare the ground for Ellington to broadcast during his time in Britain. As usual, the magazine printed a diverse selection of listeners’ comments following Ellington’s broadcast, ranging from “It was the greatest three-quarters of an hour I have listened to,” to “I am forced to protest most strongly against our good English air being polluted by Duke Ellington and his famous orchestra.”[[37]](#footnote-37) This was entirely typical of the BBC’s tendency to justify controversial decisions by proving that it was impossible for them to please everyone all of the time.

**Dances**

The third type of engagement that Ellington fulfilled during his time in Britain was to play for dances in Streatham (South London), Brighton (on the south coast), and Bolton (north of Manchester), as well as in clubs in each of the major cities on the tour. There had been a dramatic increase in dance venues in Britain following the First World War; some were converted from ice and roller skating rinks, others were purpose built. Outside London, the music was usually provided by a local dance band playing stock arrangements and occasionally by famous, London-based bands such as Jack Hylton’s. The popularity of Ellington’s dance engagements is not surprising considering that rather than having to sit through a dozen acts on a variety bill for a brief segment of Ellington, the band could be heard for much longer and in less formal surroundings than a theater. Indeed, while in variety and in concert the performances and audience reactions had been controlled by the physical confines of a theater, at dances, journalists reported something akin to the furor which attends modern-day pop stars:

The dance which took place at the Streatham Locarno last Friday (June 16) was a literal riot. Enormous crowds besieged the door and some people got forced in without paying. The attendance looked to be in the neighbourhood of 4,000, of whom hardly anybody attempted to dance to the band. They just crowded around the stand and cheered themselves hoarse.[[38]](#footnote-38)

Many accounts of Ellington’s dance hall performances mention audiences crowding around the bandstand in a manner that would not be possible or acceptable in theaters. Ellington’s dance at the Grafton Rooms in Liverpool was highly anticipated in the local community, and a special souvenir brochure was produced. A piece in the *Liverpool Echo* pointed out that the late night performance would be significant in allowing “musicians, members of the profession and other experts” to experience the impact of Ellington’s music in the ballroom.[[39]](#footnote-39) Although traditional couple dancing remained the norm at this time,

At no time during the evening, although there were about 1000 people present, did the number of couples dancing exceed one hundred. The majority remained throughout the session packed solidly around the band platform fascinated by the amazing skill and virtuosity of the musicians…. It was quite apparent that most people were intent on seeing the band in action, and having a close-up view, than of testing its adaptability for dancing purposes.[[40]](#footnote-40)

The lack of dancing to Ellington indicates that audiences differentiated his band from other ensembles providing the music in these venues. By actively choosing listening over dancing, these audiences reflected in their behaviour the growth of a contemporary distinction between “hot” jazz and dance music.[[41]](#footnote-41) As the *Liverpool Echo* put it: “They certainly conquered the dancers, but not from a dancing point of view.”[[42]](#footnote-42)

**Concerts**

Ellington gave several Sunday concerts while in the UK, including some at relatively prestigious regional venues such as the Blackpool Tower ballroom and the Royal Hall in Harrogate, as well as two sponsored by *Melody Maker* at the New Trocadero Cinema in Elephant and Castle, which lies south of the River Thames in London. The latter were intended specifically for musicians and enthusiasts. Many of these events attracted audiences of 3,000–4,000 people. The first *Melody Maker* concert was announced in the publication in May and had sold out even before Ellington arrived in London. This strong interest in these concerts seems to suggest that some discerning audience members might have been aware of the limitations that the variety setting placed upon Ellington’s performances. In the days before the concert, *Melody Maker* issued instructions in an attempt to influence a mode of behaviour similar to that expected of an audience for classical music: “May we also suggest that everybody keeps his enthusiasm within bounds and refrains from applauding individual solos so that subsequent sequences may not be drowned. We have promised [Ellington] a quiet and appreciative audience which will know what to expect and how to listen.”[[43]](#footnote-43) The organisers of the concert had invited the record shop Levy’s of Regent Street to give a hot record recital prior to the band’s appearance, maybe with the intention of encouraging similarly attentive listening from the audience when the band came on stage. However, in the concert, “not only did the applause keep breaking through as each trumpeter, saxophonist, or trombonist finished each of his little ‘turns’ but even the shrill top notes or rumbling low notes in the middle of a tune were applauded.”[[44]](#footnote-44)

Although the audience reception appears to have been very positive, Hughes and some other readers of *Melody Maker* were not happy with the concert. Writing under his critical pseudonym “Mike,” Hughes objected not only to the applause during numbers, but more fundamentally to the balance of the program:

Is Duke Ellington losing faith in his own music and turning commercial through lack of appreciation, or does he honestly under-estimate the English musical public to such an extent that a concert *for musicians* does not include *The Mooche, Mood Indigo, Lazy Rhapsody, Blue Ramble, Rockin’ in Rhythm, Creole Love Call, Old Man Blue, Baby, When You Ain’t There* or *Black Beauty*?[[45]](#footnote-45)

As implied, Hughes and the organisers of the *Melody Maker* concerts were keen to present Ellington in a formal concert situation, complete with a relatively passive audience. This was commensurate with their desire to uphold Ellington as a great artist, compatible with the Western art music canon, as the fundamental basis for appreciating and valuing his music. Ellington’s performance at the second *Melody Maker* concert seemed to satisfy Hughes, who commented that “there is very little for me to say in the way of criticism…. Only three pieces played were not actually Duke Ellington’s compositions.”[[46]](#footnote-46) However, although dances and variety performances in London and elsewhere continued to be well-attended, tickets were available on the door for the second *Melody Maker* concert, thus possibly indicating that the rather contrived format may have had limited appeal to general audiences.

This lack of interest may also illustrate an evolving strand within the British attitudes to jazz in which its differences with classical music began to be celebrated rather than suppressed. The presentation of Ellington and his band in familiar settings served to highlight these musical and cultural differences, and made a significant contribution to the growing British understanding of the importance of African American musicians in jazz. On a basic level, Ellington and his band presented undoubted exoticism, albeit in a controlled way, for British audiences. It should be further noted that Mills’s advertising manual encouraged writers to exploit the “primitive” and “jungle” characteristics of the band’s music:

Mr. Duke Ellington’s overwrought and highly sophisticated cult of the primitive is one of the most effective stunts that have appeared for a long time on the stage. It is [as] though he had applied a process of desiccation to the primitive music and tribal dance which were the far-away origins of the kind of thing he plays. By comparison with those origins the present entertainment is exceedingly cultivated.[[47]](#footnote-47)

Beyond this, a more profound appreciation of Ellington was linked with a better understanding of the context for his music. This is seen, for instance, in the impressions Hughes had gained through his experiences in Harlem and then disseminated. The personal accounts in these writings went beyond a reliance on familiar stereotypes. Several reviewers noted that the band’s performances were imbued with, and provoked in listeners, deep emotion. For example, in one *Liverpool Echo* article it is said that “Black and Tan Fantasy” “may express the soul of a submerged race struggling out of abysmal depression.”[[48]](#footnote-48) Similarly, the *Liverpool Evening Express* commented that “His music seems to be absolutely alive, primitive and vital. It expresses the soul of the people.”[[49]](#footnote-49) It became clear that Ellington’s music offered something profoundly different to British dance bands, and this difference ought to be taken seriously: “We are of the opinion that the time is ripe for the advent of another coloured band in this country, as our bands have been in a stereotyped rut and it is time that a certain judicious kick in the pants was administered.”[[50]](#footnote-50) This realisation had important practical consequences for British musicians. In a 1933 *Melody Maker* article, for instance, one writer notably argues:

Our education, hitherto so woefully neglected, is being attended to. We now have the opportunity to learn; to emulate, at least, to try to copy. We wonder how many of our bands and musicians will learn anything! Brass players will, of course, growl in the accepted Cooty [sic] and [“Tricky”] Sam [Nanton] style, but beyond that, we fear, little will be learnt. Let us, therefore, all seize these opportunities before they are too late. Let us not miss an opportunity to hear these visiting celebrities, and to learn what we can. It is madness and musical suicide not to do so.[[51]](#footnote-51)

**The “Musicians’ Union Ban”**

Unfortunately, the opportunities for direct education of British musicians were limited as Ellington’s orchestra did not return until 1958. This major gap was the result of restrictions placed upon American musicians performing in Britain. As I detail elsewhere, this state of affairs had developed gradually from the mid-1920s when questions began to be asked about the presence of American bands in Britain when native musicians were out of work. This debate gained further momentum in the context of economic decline at the end of the decade.[[52]](#footnote-52) By the time of Ellington’s 1933 tour, American bands could perform only in variety and dance halls where the resident British group was retained, and not in restaurants, where free admission was perceived to deprive British bands playing elsewhere of their audiences.[[53]](#footnote-53) Nevertheless, there were converse US-UK musician employment problems, as seen in press coverage at the time which noted that even the band of Jack Hylton – a main supporter of Ellington’s visit – was forbidden from performing in the USA. Hylton probably hoped that his role in Ellington’s visit might open up reciprocal opportunities for himself in the States, but when these were not forthcoming, he actually protested against an application for Ellington to return to Britain in 1934. The effect of this was to draw the lack of transatlantic reciprocity to the attention of the British government. A risky strategy was employed by the Ministry of Labour on the basis that a refusal to grant the necessary permits for Ellington’s orchestra might influence the American Federation of Musicians to be more receptive to British bands. Ultimately, this plan backfired, and in 1935 a stalemate situation was reached whereby neither British nor American governments would grant permits to bands from the opposite country.[[54]](#footnote-54)

Ironically, the lack of “jazz in Britain” following Ellington’s 1933 appearances – in terms of American musicians visiting and touring – acted as an impetus for the further development of an independent British jazz. Ellington’s initial visit helped to stimulate British jazz criticism which would sustain enthusiasts for the music, but the visit also helped to create a demand for black jazz musicians. This need was met not by African Americans, but instead by resident and immigrant black Britons and citizens of the British Empire, particularly West Indian musicians, whose performances were certainly more than just imitations of American models.[[55]](#footnote-55) Such trends contributed to defining British jazz. In addition, although the restriction on American musicians from 1935 is often referred to as the “Musicians’ Union ban,” this development was actually instituted by Ministry of Labour who had jurisdiction over work permits, and the reality of the so-called “ban” was rather more subtle.[[56]](#footnote-56)

Certainly, it was virtually impossible for whole bands, British or American, to perform on the opposite side of the Atlantic, but individuals were able to circumvent the restrictions in various ways. For example, Hylton received a permit to visit the US as a conductor, but he was also able to broadcast performances to America both with his band from London, and even from a ship off the US coast. He was further able to work with American musicians while the promoter paid for his band to have a two-week holiday.[[57]](#footnote-57) Similarly, American saxophonist Benny Carter worked in Britain primarily as an arranger, but was able to take a calculated risk and indulge in a small amount of playing in informal situations such as nightclubs and “rhythm clubs” (fan-based social clubs organized by hot music enthusiasts). He also recorded legitimately in the UK and even starred in a Sunday concert organized by *Melody Maker*.[[58]](#footnote-58)

**The 1948 Tour**

Some American musicians – such as Coleman Hawkins, Fats Waller, and Art Tatum – obtained permits by presenting themselves as solo cabaret or variety artists. These situations actually encouraged the visitors to interact with their British colleagues and thus provided significant educatiional opportunities. It was this loophole that allowed Ellington to return Britain in 1948 as a pianist with singer Kay Davis and Ray Nance, who sang, danced, and played trumpet and fiddle. The latter’s experience of variety performance would have been invaluable since the group spent the first two weeks of their visit at the London Palladium, performing under the heading “Sepia Panorama,” on a bill which also included comedy singer Pearl Bailey and the Nicholas brothers tap-dancing duo. During this time, these US entertainers were each accompanied by Woolf Phillips and the Skyrockets, the Palladium’s resident orchestra, but Ellington’s sheet music arrived late and the resultant lack of rehearsal led to the first performance being branded as “scrappy.”[[59]](#footnote-59)

As in 1933, Ellington’s 1948 UK “act” remained largely congruent with the expectations of mainstream variety theatre. Davis’s songs were “purely sentimental,” Nance was “an energetic and versatile entertainer,” and Ellington himself was described as both “a composer of over a thousand of the tunes which crooners croon” and a performer of “intricate arrangements which are soothing rather than exciting.”[[60]](#footnote-60) However, a review in *Billboard* (a US publication) suggested that Ellington “appeared lost without his orchestra” and while Pearl Bailey was accorded a tremendous reception, and was subsequently moved from first to last on the bill, Ellington “failed to go over with any great enthusiasm. The audience tried to warm up to his playing but the sparkle of the old Duke just didn’t seem to pass over the footlights.”[[61]](#footnote-61) Unlike his previous visit, Ellington’s 1948 tour was not extensively previewed in the British press. As a result, at the Palladium, “there was not, on the whole, the number of tried Ellington enthusiasts present to give Duke the response he is undoubtedly accustomed to.”[[62]](#footnote-62) British musicians who performed with Ellington recall the tremendous reception upon his arrival in Paris at the start of the subsequent tour of mainland Europe, but there were no reports of similar scenes in connection with his British appearances. Indeed, notification of his arrival was printed in *Melody Maker* only on the day of his arrival, and this announcement observed: “As the time of the Duke’s arrival was only known at the last minute, and only to a few, there was not the crowd that would normally have turned out to meet him.”[[63]](#footnote-63)

The British tour which commenced after the Palladium engagement avoided variety theaters in favor of venues such as the Guildhall in Southampton, City Hall in Sheffield, the New Opera House in Blackpool, St. Andrew’s Hall in Glasgow, and King’s Hall, Belle Vue, Manchester, which were more akin to concert halls than variety theaters or nightclubs. The program for these engagements was accordingly described as a concert: “The first half of each concert will feature Duke himself at the piano, the Jack Fallon Rhythm Trio, British guest artists[[64]](#footnote-64) and one of Duke’s singers. The second half will be the concert version of the Ellington revue.”[[65]](#footnote-65) A trio of Canadian expatriot bass player Jack Fallon, British guitarist Malcolm Mitchell, and drummer Tony Crombie was employed for the British and continental tour. Undoubtedly, this engagement represented a great opportunity for these musicians, and Fallon commented at the time that the experience had been “an education as well as a pleasure.”[[66]](#footnote-66) Fallon and Crombie both recall the extensive entourage which accompanied Ellington, including his road manager Al Celly, barber Billy Black, publisher Jack Robbins, the songwriter Kermit Goell, others whom Crombie termed “court jesters,” and various “ladies” who joined and left along the way. The British musicians learned and performed some music by ear, but they also recall Ellington jotting down charts for them. Commensurately, the programs included familiar numbers such as “Sophisticated Lady,” “Caravan,” and “Solitude,” and Fallon recalled performing the more recent “Transblucency,” a feature for Davis.[[67]](#footnote-67)

These performances seem to have been very well-received, and as in 1933 there was a sense among critics that the concert-style presentation was more appropriate than a variety bill for an artist of Ellington’s stature:

When the Palladium moguls have finished with Duke, they will unquestionably have knit his somewhat spreadeagled presentation into a slick West End show. That will be fine and will, no doubt, please the general public – but we can’t help feeling that it is not Duke Ellington. Perhaps on his concert tour, when he has the chance to play the music associated with his genius rather than his music-publishing interests, he will make the fans realise that this is indeed the one and only Duke who to them is a legend and an idol.[[68]](#footnote-68)

The 1948 visit represents a transitional phase in Ellington’s presentation and reception in Britain. Unlike 1933, Ellington was no longer reliant on the enthusiasm of fellow musicians (such as Hughes and Hylton) as the tour was arranged under the auspices of the promoter Harold Fielding. Compared with 1933, the balance between variety shows and concerts had shifted in favor of the latter which were also more successful. This may have been because there was greater awareness of the visit by the time the provincial tour commenced, but may also be an indication that Ellington himself – especially without the spectacle of his band – was no longer as successful in variety entertainment but increasingly appealed to a concert-going audience.[[69]](#footnote-69) However, the distinction was not absolute at this stage. Although the writer of the *Melody Maker* editorial cited above found Ray Nance’s “comedy dancing and over-vigorous singing” “almost embarrassing” at the Palladium, Max Jones noticed that the same “vocal antics and rebop dancing drew as big a hand as anything I heard” at the concerts.[[70]](#footnote-70) Also, that “an appearance scheduled for Nottingham’s Albert Hall was cancelled by its trustees, a church organisation, on the grounds that jazz was not suitable for the institution,” indicates resistance to jazz in some areas of British society and provides an interesting backdrop to the British Sacred Concerts, discussed later in this chapter.[[71]](#footnote-71)

**The 1958 Tour**

In 1956, the Musicians’ Union and the American Federation of Musicians reached an agreement whereby there could be reciprocal exchange of bands between Britain and the US. The program for Ellington’s 1958 concerts acknowledged “Harry Francis, Assistant Secretary of the Musicians’ Union, for his help in negotiating the Anglo-American exchange details.”[[72]](#footnote-72) Francis recalled that while many British promoters were keen to book American bands, few had the knowledge required to set up a tour for a British band in America. The first Anglo-American exchange in 1956 brought Stan Kenton to England under the auspices of promoter Harold Davison while Ted Heath performed in America.[[73]](#footnote-73) This arrangement set a precedent for a large number of such exchanges prior to Ellington’s return to the UK in 1958 – this time with his full orchestra, while Heath again performed in New York. By the time of Ellington’s visit, so many bands had taken advantage of the policy of reciprocity that *Melody Maker* reported that there was even some danger that the market had become over-saturated, with tickets for some American acts being slow to sell. This precipitated some debate in the pages of the magazine on the reasons for dwindling audiences which identified poor value for money (short performances for a high price); lack of publicity, especially in the provinces; the timing of shows (which adhered to the decades-old model of two performances each evening, the times of which did not seem to suit 1950s lifestyles); and the tendency to present “a few musicians under a fancy title” rather than an established group. By contrast, tickets for Ellington’s opening concerts were reported to be selling well.[[74]](#footnote-74)

Unlike in 1948, there was great anticipation of Ellington’s arrival and subsequent coverage in the national press, but this attention consistently referred back to 1933, with little or no mention of his intervening appearance. In the weeks prior to his arrival, *Melody Maker* printed a “message from Ellington” which referred to the inclusion of Harry Carney and Johnny Hodges who were said to have also been on his “last tour of the UK.” Max Jones contributed a feature entitled “This World of Jazz. The Duke – 25 Years After.” Jones mentioned hearing Ellington in 1933 and 1950 but not in 1948, although he had reported on performances given in that year.[[75]](#footnote-75) Ellington’s visit was perceived to have great historical importance, as demonstrated by assertions from writers such as Steve Voce that it was “the most outstanding event in our jazz history since the war.”[[76]](#footnote-76) Personnel and repertoire were the principle subjects of these preview articles. Having pointed out the inclusion of musicians who some readers would have heard live in 1933, Ellington’s message stated explicitly that, “As always, our main object will be to showcase the men in the band as soloists.” Leonard Feather provided detailed introductions to the band’s expected personnel.[[77]](#footnote-77) With regard to repertoire, in addition to “material that goes way back,” Ellington promised numbers from his recent albums *Ellington at Newport* (1956), *Such Sweet Thunder* (1957), and *A Drum Is a Woman* (1956), and “Portrait of Ella Fitzgerald” (from *Ella Fitzgerald Sings the Duke Ellington Songbook* [1957]) was later added to the list as a nod to co-promoter Norman Granz.[[78]](#footnote-78)

**The Royal Festival Hall Concerts**

Ellington began his 1958 tour with two concerts at London’s Royal Festival Hall, a 2,900-seat concert hall which had been built for the 1951 Festival of Britain. Although he had already presented concerts in Britain – and, in 1958, such concert presentations were actually performed mainly in Gaumont and Odeon cinemas – his inclusion in a London venue known primarily for classical music performances gave the impression of completing his transition from the variety circuit into the realms of high art in a British context. This narrative was anticipated by Feather who noted that “the last time Duke Ellington brought his full band to Europe the jazz world was incredibly different. It was 1933. Duke had never played a concert. He had written only one arrangement (*Creole Rhapsody*) that was more than three or four minutes long.” Feather’s commentary thus fostered an expectation of serious concerts of Ellington’s extended works.[[79]](#footnote-79) However, as seen in several reviews, these latter hopes were confounded in terms of both presentation and repertoire which, as in 1933, were considered to be aimed at popular taste:

Those who went to hear “the first serious jazz composer” were no doubt startled to be confronted with a sophisticated entertainer who treated his audience, his orchestra and himself with an air of urbane frivolity.[[80]](#footnote-80)

Above all, the show was gay and lighthearted, with none of the atmosphere of pious dedication to art that overcomes some jazz groups when they get into a concert hall.[[81]](#footnote-81)

The programme was surprising, consisting of medleys of Duke’s most popular numbers of the past thirty years, with but the slightest reference to the more recent orchestral suites.[[82]](#footnote-82)

Specifically, criticism levelled against Ellington focused on his presentation of “soloists – every man in the band had a considerable solo spot to himself – rather than on the orchestra as a whole.”[[83]](#footnote-83) An influential factor here was the inevitable comparison with Count Basie, who had visited Britain twice in the twelve months prior to Ellington. This was exacerbated by a *Melody Maker* feature, “This Week’s Great Jazz Controversy: Count versus Duke,” in which leading jazz musicians were invited to indulge in a “snap poll.” While Ellington was preferred for those who were interested in soloists, Basie was appreciated for his ensemble work.[[84]](#footnote-84) For Vic Bellerby, Ellington’s performances were too contrived: “Basie was quite confident to let his band sit back, find the beat and play number after number, improving all the time. Duke, the showman, played safely, far too safely – thus giving jazz lovers a sad disappointment.”[[85]](#footnote-85) Humphrey Lyttelton, the only musician in the poll who refused to side with either Ellington or Basie, pointed out that “Duke doesn’t work like Basie. It’s only on rare occasions that he rocks you in your seat with body blows from the full orchestra.”[[86]](#footnote-86) However, Ellington’s emphasis on soloists left his performances liable to similar criticisms levelled at American importations which were perceived as less coherent ensembles put together for commercial gain, such as Norman Granz’s “Jazz from Carnegie Hall.”[[87]](#footnote-87) Under the heading “I Was Disappointed,” Bellerby wrote:

The main trouble was that Duke, with typical modesty, wrongly demonstrated his unrivalled solo strength by asking nearly every member of the band to take a solo routine. And all the time we felt conscious of the hundreds of Ellington compositions waiting to be played. The true secret of Ellington’s genius is his uncanny ability to weave his soloists into an individual composition, continually absorbing our interest by the ever-changing pattern and colour. We were not given one number in which this happened.[[88]](#footnote-88)

Despite such reservations, for some, the opening of the concert served to reaffirm the transformative power of Ellington’s presence on audience and musicians alike:

Ellington himself did not come on … [T]hey launched straight into their signature tune, “Take the A Train”. It was sad: no drive, no sparkle, no swing. Then, at the end of the number, Duke Ellington walked lightly into the hall … We knew everything was going to be alright now, and it was. The music suddenly bubbled and the musicians – except for Hodges and Gonsalves who scowled throughout both sets – managed to look as if they were enjoying themselves.[[89]](#footnote-89)

More often, the democratic presentation of the individual members of the band both directly challenged the idea of Ellington as an autonomous, great artist which had persisted in British commentary since 1933, as well as upheld the value of his ensemble as a mere conduit for his individual artistic expression, a view that was in accordance with a traditional view of classical music practice. At the first mention of a possible visit in 1958, *Melody Maker*’s readers were reminded that Ellington and his ensemble had been voted top band, composer, and arranger in the magazine’s most recent poll. Critics continued to struggle towards an appreciation of Ellington, and were seemingly reluctant to depart entirely from the notion that he was conventional composer who writes for “player, not instrument”[[90]](#footnote-90):

Even inside the jazz world, the precise nature of Ellington’s method is woefully misunderstood. He is neither the archetypal pianist-dance-band-leader who plugs his own material, nor the ordinary kind of western composer. Ellington writes not for woodwind, brass and rhythm, but for the individual members of his orchestra.[[91]](#footnote-91)

No other writers go as far as Stanley Dance, whose essay in the tour program suggests that by 1958 many of the band’s sidemen could be accorded similar artistic status as their leader, thereby exposing a more equal and collaborative quality in the ensemble’s creative work:

The band is a band of personality – and personalities. As a unit, it expresses Duke’s personality. He plays piano in it, but essentially the orchestra is his instrument. It interprets his ideas and compositions as no other ever could or can, but the individuality of its components, the musicians within it, is never suppressed.[[92]](#footnote-92)

It was perhaps hardly surprising that the British public did not fully appreciate the subtlety of the relationship between Ellington and his musicians. Sinclair Traill’s editorial in the October issue of *Jazz Journal* pointed out the reliance of the British public on Ellington’s recorded output since his previous visit. Traill’s commentary is reminiscent of the situation prior to Ellington’s 1933 appearances: “We bought all his available records that we hadn’t already got, imported others from America, and have been collecting them ever since.” Ellington’s music was thought to be particularly well suited to consumption in this way, as his was “one band whose records, exhibiting an apparently inexhaustible range of tone colours, have always managed to hold our interest and titillate our musical appetite.”[[93]](#footnote-93) Other writers expected that being able to hear Ellington’s band live would improve his popularity: “It has been very noticeable recently – particularly in the case of Count Basie – how much personal presence comes over at a live performance, and consequently how much must be lost on wax.”[[94]](#footnote-94) It was also possible for adverse comparisons to be made with well-loved recorded versions of Ellington repertoire: “[Sam Woodyard] and Paul Gonsalves tried valiantly through 30 choruses to whip up the excitement of the recorded ‘Diminuendo [and Crescendo in Blue]’ solo. But it is asking too much to expect this to strike fire regularly.”[[95]](#footnote-95) Interestingly, in an interview for *Melody Maker*, saxophonist Harry Carney indicated an awareness of the dominance of recordings and their influence on audiences: “‘Do you play the same choruses all the time, Harry?’ ‘Yes, I do. Because when I saw Hawkins I wanted to hear exactly the same notes as he did on the records. I wanted to see his movements, the expressions on the face – everything. So I play the same choruses, too, in case there may be a kid who might want it that way as well.’”[[96]](#footnote-96) That said, such replication would not be expected by critics and audiences who upheld spontaneity as a criterion for valuing jazz performances. For instance, Dance encouraged *Jazz Journal* readers that “because Duke’s band is less like a machine than most other big jazz groups, we suggest you catch it at as many concerts as possible. Even in the very unlikely event of its playing the same programme every night, there are sure to be substantially rewarding differences in performance.”[[97]](#footnote-97) Lyttelton assumed a more critical stance, arguing that the myths surrounding legendary artists were exacerbated by the

unnatural climate brought about by distance and the Musicians’ Union ban, when our knowledge and judgement of musicians was based almost exclusively on gramophone records. And we have seen over and over again how discrepancy between the legend and reality has led to impaired judgement and bewilderment.[[98]](#footnote-98)

Of course, the period 1933–1948 encompassed the American recording ban which restricted the flow of music still further.

**The Leeds Concerts**

Ellington’s visit to Leeds is frequently noted by commentators, as it was on this occasion that he was introduced to Queen Elizabeth II, a meeting which inspired the subsequent composition of *The Queen’s Suite*. However, the distinct changes in Ellington’s approach for the Leeds concerts – especially when compared with his opening concerts at the Royal Festival Hall – have attracted less attention. Ellington’s booking for the Leeds Festival appears to have been a key factor in the development of his British tour, as this was reported as a possibility as early as February.[[99]](#footnote-99) In 1858, a music festival was staged in Leeds – a city in Yorkshire, North East England – to celebrate the opening of the Town Hall by Queen Victoria. Thereafter, this event continued roughly triennially. The Festival usually included only classical music, and featuring new work from significant living composers, including Arthur Sullivan, Antonín Dvořák, Edward Elgar, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Sergei Rachmaninoff, and William Walton. The Festival expanded in length and scope in the years leading up to its centenary, and “by 1958 … had spread to even more venues, lasted for week and included other genres.”[[100]](#footnote-100) The Earl of Harewood took over as President of the Festival in the centenary year, and his brother – jazz enthusiast and writer Gerald Lascelles – undoubtedly influenced the introduction of jazz into the program. Described as “the most ambitious week of jazz ever staged in a British city,” there were concerts by Muddy Waters, Jimmy Rushing, and the British bands of [Humphrey] Lyttelton, [John] Dankworth and the Jazz Today Unit in addition to Ellington’s concerts.[[101]](#footnote-101)

As in 1933, critics attempted to influence Ellington’s programming. Traill travelled with Ellington on the train from London to Leeds and tried to persuade him to dispense with what he perceived were the more commercial elements of his previous performances:

We did try to impress upon him that in our opinion he could dispense with the drum solo routine; plus other parts of his programme which had fallen uneasily upon ears attuned to catch Ellington-sounds only. We were informed that the programming for the vast audiences he plays for has been guided by experience. It is an effort to try to please everybody. But, we insisted in our smoothest tones, could not the drum solo be dropped at least from the Leeds shows? The drum routine stayed where it always had been and received by far the greatest applause of the night! “Ah”, said Duke, when we visited his dressing room after the show, “here’s my friend who knows all about drum solos!”[[102]](#footnote-102)

As this encounter demonstrates, Ellington was well aware of how to approach playing at the festival. He wrote, albeit retrospectively, in *Music Is My Mistress*: “Festivals of one kind or another had by now become the springboard for new works, much in the same way as our annual Carnegie Hall concerts had previously been. In 1958, I was invited to perform at the first [*sic*] festival of the arts in Leeds, England, where I had the great honor of being presented to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth.”[[103]](#footnote-103) In addition to retaining the drum feature, “Hi Fi Fo Fum,” at the start of the second half, Ellington began his Leeds concerts with the same sequence of numbers as at the Royal Festival Hall (“Take the ‘A’ Train,” “Black and Tan Fantasy,” “Creole Love Call,” “The Mooche,” and “Newport Up”). He then introduced “surprises” by changing the features for individuals. For example, Jimmy Hamilton was heard on “My Funny Valentine” instead of “Tenderly,” Clark Terry was featured on “Juniflip” instead of “Perdido,” Cat Anderson on “Caravan” instead of “El Gato,” and a particular high point, Johnny Hodges on “Things Ain’t What They Used to Be” rather than “Jeep’s Blues.”[[104]](#footnote-104) Critics who had heard several of Ellington’s performances on tour appreciated this variety. This approach also appeared to have the effect of rejuvenating the band, with Max Jones reporting that “the orchestra was playing very keenly, with more bite than I had heard at any concert except at the Kilburn State.”[[105]](#footnote-105) Most notably, Ellington also performed six pieces from *Such Sweet Thunder* prior to the interval, whereas previously only the “Sonnet to Hank Cinq” had been included. Moreover, in the first Saturday concert at Leeds, which was attended by Prince Philip, the “monologue” “Pretty and the Wolf” was included. These works were notably associated with Ellington’s appearances at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Ontario. Although this might appear to be a direct response to the demands of British critics for performances of demonstrably artistic works, it is entirely consistent with Ellington’s more adventurous programming not only for concerts and festivals, as indicated above, but also on his recent albums which, as previously discussed, were largely responsible for setting British critical expectations of his live performances.[[106]](#footnote-106)

For Dance, these alterations to the program did not go far enough, but he did not blame Ellington. Instead, this choice reflected the state of British jazz audiences who continued to respond favorably to numbers which he perceived not to be “most typical and worthy of Duke Ellington”:

A year or so ago we felt that a discerning jazz audience was in the process of creation here. The undiscriminating reaction and applause to Duke’s programme painfully indicated that this was not so. It is a shock to realise that, despite all the magazines, books and records, the audience of 1958 knows far less about jazz and its verities than that of 1933.[[107]](#footnote-107)

Although Ellington employed some similar alterations in subsequent concerts in Croydon and at the final concerts of the tour in Kilburn, the opening Festival Hall concert provided the blueprint for the majority of the tour.[[108]](#footnote-108) As a result, far from the variation in Ellington’s performances that Dance had anticipated, critics and Ellington fans who attended several concerts were particularly disappointed by the (almost) “machine-like” replication of the same program. This observations brought Jones full circle in his summation of the tour to the concerns about visiting American performers which were being debated at the time of Ellington’s arrival, and in particular the detrimental effect of what he perceived as the more-or-less pre-formulated “jazz concert” on British audiences. Jones maintained the view that in order to hear the Ellington orchestra at its best, it was necessary “to go to a place where the band played for dancing.”[[109]](#footnote-109) However, Ellington’s Sacred Concerts offered a significant counterweight to this view, and they also more generally challenged established ideas about the most appropriate presentation of Ellington.

**The Sacred Concerts**

Ellington presented his First Sacred Concert in Coventry Cathedral and at Great St. Mary’s, Cambridge, at the conclusion of his 1966 and 1967 British tours, respectively. According to an article in *The Guardian* newspaper, Ellington was responsible for initiating the Coventry concert by sending a tape of his sacred music to the provost of the Cathedral. Other sources suggest that the approach came directly from ABC Television, which broadcast to the Midlands and North of England at weekends until 1968.[[110]](#footnote-110) Regardless, the concert was organized rapidly and announced at short notice as an unplanned extension to the 1966 tour. Ellington commented at the time: “I’ve been invited to do this programme in many churches and I’m always honoured of course. When the chance came to play at Coventry I was delighted. No, I’ve not seen the cathedral yet.”[[111]](#footnote-111) No doubt this comment might have caused a frisson for the majority of readers who would be familiar with the uncompromisingly modernist style of Britain’s newest cathedral. The church of St. Michael in Coventry, West Midlands, was designated as a cathedral in 1918 but was destroyed as a result of bombing in the Second World War. A decision was taken to build a new cathedral while leaving the ruins of the former building “as a moving reminder of the folly and waste of war.” The new cathedral, designed by Basil Spence, was consecrated in May 1962, an occasion marked by the premiere of Benjamin Britten’s *War Requiem*.[[112]](#footnote-112) Undoubtedly, the interior of the cathedral provided a visually striking backdrop for Ellington’s performance which was particularly important for the television broadcast. As Jones observed, “Just to see the Ellington band set up on the Chancel steps, in front of the High Altar and Graham Sutherland’s Great Tapestry [of Christ], was a memorable experience.”[[113]](#footnote-113) In the Coventry concert, Ellington drew on numbers from his previous sacred concerts with the addition of “Come Easter,” which was described as “a shortish and nicely grave band piece.” The concert culminated with “In the Beginning God” (ITBG) before the band offered encores of “West Indian Pancake” and “La Plus Belle Africaine.”[[114]](#footnote-114) The following year, Ellington performed a UK Sacred Concert with a similar program in the more modest and traditional surroundings of Great St. Mary’s, the university church in Cambridge. Ellington’s high-profile 1973 European tour – which also included a return to the Palladium for an appearance in the Royal Variety Performance that was broadcast on national television – began with the premiere of his Third Sacred Concert at Westminster Abbey. The Abbey is located at the heart of the capital, next to the Houses of Parliament, and has enjoyed particular association with British royalty as a free chapel of the Sovereign and the coronation church since 1066. The concert was organized by Gerald Lascelles, who had been so influential on Ellington’s inclusion in the 1958 Leeds Festival and a figure who would undoubtedly have been able to secure the venue through his royal connections. Lascelles was also Chairman of the United Nations Association Concerts Committee and Ellington’s concert was given in celebration of United Nations Day, which marks the signing of the UN charter on 24 October 1945. The concert was attended by the then Prime Minister, Edward Heath, and the Queen’s daughter, Princess Margaret.

Critics identified some significant problems with the Sacred Concerts. Firstly, the musical material rarely escaped criticism:

*ITBG* a trifle too “bitty” for this reviewer, though, and contains several excruciating moments, the classic low spot being sustained by the long-suffering Cliff Adams Singers, refugees from the television commercial and Top-40 backing group, conscientiously chanting the names of the books of the Bible in ghastly mid-Atlantic accents.[[115]](#footnote-115)

The newer pieces seem to add little to what Ellington has previously done, and done well.[[116]](#footnote-116)

In addition, the acoustic properties of the surroundings contributed to a less-than-perfect experience for the audience:

The occasion was momentous, the jazz superb, the acoustics, unfortunately, vile, translating the impeccable precision of the Ellington brass into the shambling tones of a third-rate pit orchestra.[[117]](#footnote-117)

Hearing them, in a nave which is eighty feet high, eighty wide, and more than three times that in length, was a more powerful experience, though acoustically the lofty hall seemed far from perfect.[[118]](#footnote-118)

Although I was sitting approximately thirty yards from the rostrum, much of the proceedings were indistinct or inaudible to me…. And when we can buy the record and hear how it all actually sounded, I think it will be evident that the great man’s visit to Westminster Abbey was time well spent.[[119]](#footnote-119)

With such views in mind, it perhaps seems odd that reviewers were generally in agreement that the Ellington Sacred Concerts were successful. This general assessment was both despite and because of the use of what a photo-journalism piece in *Jazz Monthly* termed “improbable” venues for Ellington performances.[[120]](#footnote-120) The concerts have to be put into the context of earlier objections to jazz on moral grounds in Britain (sometimes actually advanced by members of the clergy), which would have precluded its inclusion in religious buildings.[[121]](#footnote-121) Certainly, this history was not far from the minds of the critics in attendance in 1966:

On Duke Ellington’s first British tour in 1933, such an occurrence would have been unthinkable. Indeed, had the Duke band stolen into some holy place and played *Mood Indigo*, there would certainly have been clerical dismissals, questions in the House and thunderings in a *Times* leader.[[122]](#footnote-122)

There was certainly no sense that either [the music] or its composer and his artists being out of place in a cathedral.[[123]](#footnote-123)

This underlying tension between genre and venue illuminates the significance of the traditional-yet-modern Coventry Cathedral as the venue for Ellington’s first British Sacred Concert. Indeed, the success of this concert – where the presence of television cameras attracted more criticism than the actual performances – must have encouraged the use of a more traditional venue in Cambridge the following year (a location where jazz appreciation and performance was well-established in the university community and likely to result in an enthusiastic audience).[[124]](#footnote-124) Reflecting on the Cambridge concert in *Downbeat*, Valerie Wilmer commented on the lack of tension between the traditional religious surroundings and modern jazz: “The hallowed portals of the 13th-century church didn’t daunt the swingers as much as had the forbidding atmosphere of the Albert Hall.”[[125]](#footnote-125)

Ultimately, Ellington’s 1973 concert was presented in surroundings which were not only traditional but steeped in significant British history: “The Abbey is a deal more imposing than Coventry Cathedral, and more oppressive, I would imagine, so far as jazz spirit is concerned.”[[126]](#footnote-126) The largely positive reception of the two earliest British sacred concerts must also be considered with reference to the tours of which they were the concluding event. The Coventry performance took place at the end of Ellington’s tour with Ella Fitzgerald, a billing which provoked debate in *Melody Maker*’sletters pages before the performances had even commenced. A letter from Vic Bellerby strongly re-articulates familiar arguments around the commercial nature of vocal performances which he clearly distinguishes from the artistry of instrumental jazz, portraying the inclusion of Fitzgerald to be detrimental to the proper presentation of Ellington.[[127]](#footnote-127) By contrast, tickets for the Coventry concert were free and thus appeared to subvert commercial motives of promoters, although the reported “black market” activity was perhaps inevitable.[[128]](#footnote-128)

In 1967, the Cambridge concert was immediately preceded by a concert in the Royal Albert Hall with the London Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO). Despite decades of arguing for the presentation of Ellington as a serious artist, the performances of works such as *A Tone Parallel to Harlem* in an established concert hall by a renowned symphony orchestra were problematic for the critics. Both Wilmer for *Downbeat* and Ronald Atkins for *The Guardian* felt that the orchestra added little to Ellington’s work, due in part to both weaknesses they perceived in the extended compositions which were performed and the fact that they preferred the intimacy of the Cambridge concert:

At the little university church of Great St. Mary, last month, [singer Esther Marrow] touched more hearts and moved more souls with a few magnificent bars of Ellington’s *Come Sunday* than the combined forces of the composer, his orchestra, and the London Philharmonic had succeeded in doing the previous evening when they all but filled the vast arena of London’s acoustically-antiquated Royal Albert Hall.[[129]](#footnote-129)

Neither event was outstanding, understandably enough, as Ellington was not on home ground…. The evening at Cambridge was more satisfying if not noticeably uplifting…. As a warm and unpretentious religious spectacular it was very well received.[[130]](#footnote-130)

In a 1967 column in *Jazz Journal*, Bellerby was specific in linking presentations of Ellington alongside both Fitzgerald and the LPO as unsuitable, in his view forcing London audiences out to the provinces to hear a “band concert.”[[131]](#footnote-131) In essence, critics objected to the performances with Fitzgerald and with the LPO as commercially contrived, whereas the Sacred Concerts, despite the musical and acoustic problems, were appreciated as a direct, albeit calculated, expression of Ellington’s persona:

The suite [sic] was Ellington at his most complex and perhaps self-conscious, but certainly not least effective.[[132]](#footnote-132)

But something was lacking. Could it be that in his aspirations toward the acceptance that is already his, Ellington’s pretentiousness has conquered his “soul”?[[133]](#footnote-133)

In 1973, Jones could not disguise a similar yearning to Bellerby for the Ellington of old, regretting that the Westminster event was “less of a band concert, less of a swinging affair, than previous concerts had been.” In Jones’s view, Ellington’s performances within a religious context had always been received with minimal controversy in Britain, but latterly there was generally a greater sense acceptance and understanding.[[134]](#footnote-134) And, according to Les Tomkins,

If anybody went to the Abbey thinking in terms of the Ellington band’s vast jazz repertoire, they would have been dissatisfied. This had little to do with that. It included jazz rhythms, it was motivated by that innate jazz feel, but essentially it was Duke Ellington’s elaborate, eloquent hymn to his maker.[[135]](#footnote-135)

Moreover, most reviewers of the Coventry and Cambridge concerts note that the audience were given permission to applaud, indicating that Ellington’s performances transcended the usual behaviors associated with such venues, but it was a wider sense of transcendence which dominated the reception of the final British Sacred Concert.

In 1973, Ellington’s autobiography, *Music Is My Mistress*, was about to be published, and although his lymphatic cancer was not yet public knowledge, Ellington was noticeably weaker. In this context, it is perhaps not so surprising that Derek Jewell’s extensive *Melody Maker* article previewing the Westminster Abbey concert already sounds like a retrospective: “Any Ellington performance these days is an event to be treasured, not missed, since logic dictates that even the Iron Duke and his musicians will not be able to go on indefinitely.”[[136]](#footnote-136) For an artist clearly in the final phase of his career, if not his life, the expression of personal faith was appreciated as more genuine than before, especially as Ellington repeatedly asserted around this time that the Sacred Concerts were the most important things he had ever done. Jewell understood the Sacred Concerts as one part of an artistic persona which transcended boundaries between art and popular genres, venues, and performance practices:

In Europe we tend to treat the Duke so seriously and so royally (as he truly deserves) that we’ve perhaps lost sight of the whole aura of the man’s background. He plays sacred concerts, yes; he plays seriously to serious people, yes; but he is also of the world, and one facet of his multi-faceted music is about that too…. He plays cathedrals, concerts, casinos. He’s for fun as well as for fundamental.[[137]](#footnote-137)

Despite his reservations about the concert performance itself, Ronald Atkins appreciated the wider artistic importance of Ellington’s sacred work, making an explicit reference to racial identity which was relatively rare in post-1933 British writing on Ellington: “By remaining true to his roots, by exploiting the gospel elements which make up a powerful strand of the black American tradition, he has, however, produced a form that can surmount the barrier relegating religious music to High Art.”[[138]](#footnote-138) For Jones, too, the impact of the concert transcended cultural boundaries to make a unique contribution to the wider history of Britain:

Westminster Abbey holds a unique historical place in the consciousness of most English-speaking nations. Nothing like the sweet thunder of Duke’s concert of sacred music had ever infiltrated its domes and pillars, tombs and pews, its choir and nave before. And in all probability, nothing ever will again.[[139]](#footnote-139)

**Conclusion**

In 1933, Ellington’s reception was governed by expectations associated with variety theatre, radio broadcasting, dance engagements, and concerts. British critics upheld values associated with high art music as the principal criteria for evaluating Ellington, and attempted to influence both performers and audiences into conforming to conventions associated with concert presentations. Realization that these compromises were unsuccessful for either side was fueled by the growing awareness of the particular qualities of Ellington’s art, influenced by a developing understanding of the racial dimension of his work and jazz more widely. Ellington’s 1948 performances have been neglected by commentators both then and now. However, they represent an important phase in the transition from variety theater to (provincial) concert halls, and notably advanced the presentation of a combination of what would have previously been classified as “art” and “popular” aspects of Ellington’s work. In retrospect, it is not surprising that following Ellington’s absence from the UK, during which his ensemble work was represented exclusively through his albums, concerts staged at the Royal Festival Hall in 1958 disappointed the critics. However, his Leeds performances drew on a “festival” presentation model which was new – and successful – in Britain, and which again featured a balanced program. At the same time, the replication of concert programs elsewhere on the tour meant that some critics continued to uphold dance engagements as the best way to experience Ellington, now employing criteria more typically associated with jazz, such as variety and spontaneity, in their judgments of his performances. This perception was challenged by the Sacred Concerts, which presented Ellington in a new situation where – unlike variety theaters, dance clubs, and concert halls – there were no particular performance practices to which he would be expected to conform.

Significantly, the Sacred Concerts prompted critical appreciation of the unique qualities of the live event, complete with acoustic and even musical imperfections, which could not be replicated by recordings on which British Ellington fans had been so reliant in the past. Ultimately, Ellington’s sacred music could not be understood other than as a personal expression. This view was commensurate with his status as an artist, albeit in a rather romantic sense, especially given the retrospective tone of contemporary commentary. The concerts were also perceived to be largely transcendent of particular expectations concerning genre, venue, and performance practices, and therefore could be more readily evaluated on their own terms. However, this assessment of Ellington was not entirely new, notwithstanding the numerous diversions along the way which have been discussed across this chapter. In 1933, when Stanley Nelson posed the question of whether Ellington’s music was “art or debauchery,” he identified its direct appeal to the senses, and the *Liverpool Post and Mercury* commented: “When a man is taken up with equal enthusiasm by lovers of jazz and the musical intelligentsia there is obviously something very special about him.”[[140]](#footnote-140) Rather, it was the Sacred Concerts that finally provided opportunities for the long-held desire of British critics to understand and promote Ellington as an artist to be fully realized.

1. Duke Ellington, “Duke Tells of 10 Top Thrills in 25 Years,” Downbeat, 5 November 1952, 1. Ellington’s appearances at the London Palladium in 1933 are considered in detail in chapter 9 of the author’s (née Catherine Parsonage) *The Evolution of Jazz in Britain*, 1880–1935 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005). The title of this chapter is a reference to an article written by Stanley Nelson for the British theatrical trade paper, *The Era*, in response to Ellington’s 1933 visit: Stanley R. Nelson, “Ellington and After! Art or Debauchery?,” Era, 21 June 1933, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. I acknowledge the valuable work of Howard Rye in reconstructing detailed tour itineraries for many visiting American groups, including Ellington in 1933. See Howard Rye, “Visiting Firemen 1: Duke Ellington,” Storyville, 88 (April 1980): 128–30. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See, for example, Brian Priestley “Ellington Abroad,” in The Cambridge Companion to Duke Ellington, ed. Ed Green(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 55–66. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. “Ellington for Us – Spike for U.S.,” *Melody Maker*, January 1933, 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Parsonage, *Evolution*,228–30. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Spike Hughes, “Day by Day in New York,” *Melody Maker*,May 1933, 353. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
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8. Nicholson, *Reminiscing*, 152–9. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Duke Ellington, “‘I’ll Be Seeing You!’ Says Ellington,” *Rhythm*, June 1933, 34–6; also see Rye, “Visiting Firemen 1,” 129. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Nicholson, *Reminiscing*, 153. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Parsonage, *Evolution*, 53–4. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Hughes, “Meet the Duke,” 8, and Constant Lambert, *Music Ho!* (London: Faber, 1934; reprint 1966), 187. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Hughes, “Day by Day,” 353. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Jack Hylton, “The Dance Orchestra in Vaudeville,” *Radio Times*, 8 February 1929, 319. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. *Performer*,“Variety News,” 14 June 1933, 4; Hughes, “Meet the Duke,”8. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. “The Duke at the Palladium: Long Awaited Debut to Packed Houses,” *Melody Maker*,17 June 1933, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Ibid., 1–2. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Constant Lambert, “Matters Musical,” *Sunday Referee*,25 June 1933, 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. “London After Dark: Varieties,” *Evening Standard*,13 June 1933, 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. “Editorial: Amazing Ellington,” *Rhythm*, July 1933, 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. “The Duke at the Palladium: Composer-Conductor of All Black Band,” *Daily Express*,13 June 1933, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. “Round the Theatres,” *Liverpool Echo*, 27 June 1933, 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. “Duke Ellington’s Triumph at the Holborn Empire,” *Era*, 12 July 1933, 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. “So This Is Harlem!,” *Glasgow Evening News*, 4 July 1933, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. “The Duke at the Palladium,” *Melody Maker*,1. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. “Readers Views on the Ellington Concert,” *Melody Maker*,15 July 1933, 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Stanley R. Nelson, “Ellington Over London!: Introspection in Indigo,” *Era*, 14 June 1933, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. “The Duke at the Palladium,” *Melody Maker*,1–2. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. “Revue and Variety on Merseyside,” *Liverpool Evening Express*, 27 June 1933, 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. “Wireless Notes,” *Manchester Guardian*,15 June 1933, 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Nelson, “Ellington and After!,” 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. “Radio Reports,” *Melody Maker*,24 June 1933, 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Quoted in Barry Ulanov, Duke Ellington (London: Musicians Press, 1946), 139. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Lawrence Duval, “The Genesis of Jazz and the Birth of the Blues,” *Radio Times*, 17 March 1933, 658. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Constant Lambert, “The Future of Highbrow Jazz,” *Radio Times*, 17 March 1933, 659. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Quoted in A. H. Lawrence, Duke Ellington and His World (New York: Routledge, 2001), 205. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. “Ellington Fever Peak,” *Melody Maker*, 24 June 1933, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. “Ballroom vs. Stage,” *Liverpool Echo*, 28 June 1933, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. “Dancing on Merseyside,” *Liverpool Echo*, 5 July 1933, 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. See Parsonage, *Evolution*, 191 ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. “Dancing on Merseyside,” *Liverpool Echo*, 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. “Ellington Fever,” *Melody Maker*,2. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. “Our London Correspondence,” *Manchester Guardian*, 26 June 1933, 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Spike Hughes, “Four Thousand Delighted Fans but ‘Mike’ Is Not so Pleased about It,” *Melody Maker*,1 July 1933, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Spike Hughes, “Mike’s Report on the Second Ellington *Melody Maker* Concert,” *Melody Maker*, 22 July 1933, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. “Empire Theatre,” *Liverpool Post and Mercury*, 27 June 1933, 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. “Round the Theatres,” *Liverpool Echo*, 27 June 1933, 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. “Revue and Variety on Merseyside,” *Liverpool Evening Express*, 23 June 1933, 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. “The Duke to Open at the Palladium on June 12th,” *Rhythm*,June 1933, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. “Our Education,” *Melody Maker*, 22 July 1933, 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Parsonage, *Evolution*, 218–20. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Ibid., 220. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Ibid., 253–54. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Catherine Tackley, “Race, Identity and the Meaning of Jazz in Post-Second World War Britain,” in Black Music in Post-Second World War Britain, eds. Jon Stratton and Nabeel Zuberi (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014) [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. See the detailed acount by Martin Cloonan and Matt Brennan, “Alien Invasions: The British Musicians’ Union and Foreign Musicians,” Popular Music 32 (2013): 277–95. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Parsonage, *Evolution*, 256. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. For a more detailed account of Carter’s time in Britain, see Catherine Tackley, “Benny Carter in Britain, 1936–37,” in Eurojazzland, eds. Luca Cerchiari, Laurent Cugny, and Franz Kerschbaumer (Lebanon, NH: Northeastern University Press, 2012), 167–88. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Stuart S. Allen, “London Largo: A Weary Duke Errs by Not Rehearsing with Ork,” *Downbeat*, 28 July 1948, 2; “Ellington Is Here!,” *Melody Maker*, 26 June 1948, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. “Palladium,” *Times* (London),22 June 1948, 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. “Palladium, London,” *Billboard*, 3 July 1948, 44; “Fallon Trio to Accompany Duke on Concert Tour,” *Melody Maker*,3 July 1948, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Ibid., 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. “Duke Ellington Palladium and Concert-Tour Plans,” *Melody Maker*,19 June 1948, 1; “Ellington Is Here!,” 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. For example, the harmonica player Ronald Chesney – who played a largely classical repertoire – was included at several, if not all, destinations. Fallon and Crombie recall the Nicholas brothers travelling as part of the Ellington entourage, but it seems unlikely that they usually performed in the concerts. In Manchester, for example, the brothers performed at the city’s Palace Theatre. Exceptionally, Fallon remembered Harold Nicholas sitting in for Crombie on drums on one of the European dates. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. “Fallon Trio,” 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Jack Fallon, “Play It as You Feel It, Says Duke,” *Melody Maker*, 24 July 1948, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. “Palladium, London,” *Billboard*, 44; Tony Crombie, interview by Tony Middleton, and Jack Fallon, interview by Tony Middleton, both 1995, the Oral History of Jazz in Britain, British Library Sound Archive. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. “Editorial: Apprehension,” *Melody Maker* 26 June 1948, 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. “Ellington Provincial Concert Triumphs,” *Melody Maker*,10 July 1948, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. “Editorial: Apprehension,” 4; “Duke Ellington to Follow British Provincial Triumph with Dates on the Continent,” *Melody Maker*,17 July 1948, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Klaus Strateman, Duke Ellington: Day by Day and Film by Film (Copenhagen: Jazz Media, 1992), 292. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. *Souvenir Programme: Norman Granz in Association with Harold Davison Presents Duke Ellington and Fis Famous Orchestra in Concert* (1958). [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Harry Francis, “Jazz in Britain, 1924–1974: Reciprocal Arrangements,” http://jazzpro.nationaljazzarchive.org.uk/Francis/As%20I%20heard%20it%20Part%205.htm (accessed 30 September 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. “Cool-Off Fans Puzzle Agents … but Ellington Tour Looks Good,” *Melody Maker*, 20 September 1958, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Duke Ellington, “Frankly – This Is the Greatest!,” *Melody Maker*, 27 September 1958, 1; Max Jones, “This World of Jazz: The Duke, 25 Years After,” *Melody Maker*, 4 October 1958, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Steve Voce, “And All the Duke’s Men,” *Jazz Journal*, October 1958, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Ellington, “Frankly,” 1; Leonard Feather, “Ellington: Meet the Band!,” *Melody Maker*, 4 October 1958, 2–3. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Ellington, “Frankly,” 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Feather, “Ellington,” 2–3. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Humphrey Lyttelton, “If They Criticize Duke I May Get Violent,” *Melody Maker*, 11 October 1958, 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Philip Gaskell, “Ellington Returns,” *Observer* (London), 12 October 1958, 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. “This Week’s Great Jazz Controversy: Count versus Duke,” *Melody Maker,* 11 October 1958, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Vic Bellerby, “I Was Disappointed (Ellington Tour),” *Melody Maker*, 11 October 1958, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Humphrey Lyttelton, “About Ellington,” *Melody Maker*, 25 October 1958, 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. “Cool-Off Fans,” *Melody Maker*, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Bellerby, “I Was Disappointed,” 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Gaskell, “Ellington Returns,” 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. H. J., “Score for Player, Not Instrument,” *Manchester Guardian*, 6 October 1958, 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
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92. Stanley Dance, “The Eloquence of Ellington,” in *Souvenir Programme: Norman Granz,* 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Sinclair Traill, “Editorial: Duke’s Back,” *Jazz Journal*, October 1958, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
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96. Maurice Burman, “Harry Carney Talks: All I Want Is to Stay with Duke,” *Melody Maker*, 11 October 1958, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Stanley Dance, “Lightly and Politely,” *Jazz Journal*, October 1958, 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
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101. “Ellington to Meet the Queen,” *Melody Maker*, 18 October 1958, 1; “Queen to Hear Jazz at Leeds,” *Melody Maker*, 11 October 1958, 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Sinclair Traill, “Editorial: Leeds, Music and Musicians,” *Jazz Journal*, November 1958, 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Ellington, *Mistress*, 196. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Lyttelton, “About Ellington,” 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Max Jones, “This World of Jazz Visits Leeds … and Leeds Takes Its Festival Calmly,” *Melody Maker*, 18 October 1958, 13. Here Jones refers to the concerts at the Kilburn State, which immediately proceeded Ellington’s first concert in Leeds. The band returned to Kilburn for the final concerts of the tour. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Jones, “A Knockout,” 3; Jones, “This World of Jazz,” 13; and Traill, “Editorial: Leeds,” 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Stanley Dance, “Lightly and Politely,” *Jazz Journal*, November 1958, 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Vic Bellerby, “Jazz Fans ‘Bewildered,’” *Melody Maker*, 1 November 1958, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
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127. Vic Bellerby, “A Plot Against the Duke’s Fans?” [letter], *Melody Maker*, 15 January 1966, 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
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