NEVER NO LAMENT

Duke Ellington and the Blanton-Webster Band

featuring the Princeton University Concert Jazz Ensemble and Swingtette

directed by Anthony D.J. Branker

Saturday, March 3, 2007 at 8:00 p.m.

Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall Princeton University

This performance is an offering of the Looking At: Jazz, America’s Art Form series in collaboration with the Princeton Public Library
Program

Swingtet

Come Rain or Come Shine
Harold Arlen/Johnny Mercer
transcription/arrangement by Allison Wood

Feeling Nostalgic
Matt Wong

Stars Fell on Alabama
Frank Perkins/Mitchell Parish
arr. Matt Wong

Alone Together
Arthur Schwartz/Howard Dietz
arr. Zack Wieder

Concert Jazz Ensemble

Ko-Ko
Edward Kennedy Ellington

Jack The Bear
Edward Kennedy Ellington
arr. Ellington/Billy Strayhorn

Mr. J.B. Blues
Edward Kennedy Ellington/
Jimmy Blanton

Harlem Airshaft
Edward Kennedy Ellington

Intermission

Concert Jazz Ensemble

In A Mellow Tone
Edward Kennedy Ellington

Main Stem
Edward Kennedy Ellington

Concerto For Cootie
Edward Kennedy Ellington

Never No Lament
Edward Kennedy Ellington

Rumpus In Richmond
Edward Kennedy Ellington

Across The Track Blues
Edward Kennedy Ellington

Cottontail
Edward Kennedy Ellington
arr. Ellington/Ben Webster

*all Duke Ellington compositions were transcribed by David Berger

SWINGTET

Joseph Codega, trumpet
Robbie Spackey, alto saxophone
Nicholas Antoine, alto saxophone
Robert W. Enoch, tenor saxophone
Zack Wieder, guitar
Daniel Berry, piano
Allison Wood, bass
Matt Wong, bass
Tyler Pines, drums
Mischa Carlson, drums

CONCERT JAZZ ENSEMBLE

Saxophones

alto 1: Stephen Hammer
alto 2: Ross Silverman
tenor 1: Robert W. Enoch
tenor 2: Jonathan Scholl
baritone: Anthony Badaracco

Trombones

lead: Charles Sneath
2nd: Matt Rich
3rd: Daniel Jaffe
4th: Katherine Sanden

Trumpets

lead: Andrew Sowa
2nd: Joseph Codega
3rd: Peter Ketchem-Colwill
4th: Harrison Frye

Rhythm Section

piano: Julia Brav
DanielBerry

guitar: Zachary Wieder
bass: Dean Reynolds
Allison Wood

drums: Chuck Staab
Tyler Pines

"Never No Lament:
Duke Ellington and the Blanton-Webster Band"

The year 1939 was an important point in the life of the Duke Ellington Orchestra. Besides the recent addition of legendary composer, arranger and pianist Billy Strayhorn, this was the year that the great Jimmy Blanton joined the ensemble as bassist, to be later followed by the extraordinary tenor saxophonist soloist Ben Webster. Although already rich with such unique musical personalities as Cootie Williams, Rex Stewart, Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton, Juan Tizol, Barney Bigard, Harry Carney, and Johnny Hodges, Ellington's Orchestra was about to be impacted by the historically significant contributions of these new additions during one of the most creative periods in Ellington's career. According to jazz historian Alyn Shipton, "Blanton had the rare ability to produce bass lines that combined harmonic precision with melodic creativity, and although he remains best known for his duos with Ellington, his most enduring contribution to jazz was to bring about a transformation of the rhythm section of the big band." Ben Webster is considered to be one of the three most important and influential tenor saxophonists of the swing era along with Coleman Hawkins and Lester Young, but it was during his time in the Ellington band that he had the opportunity to develop his distinctive voice as a soloist as well as his aggressive approach and robust sound.
Princeton University Jazz Program

Throughout the years, the Princeton University Jazz Program under the direction of Anthony D.J. Branker has sought to educate and expose the university community to the artistic and historical significance of jazz by presenting artists and repertoire that are representative of the wide spectrum of styles and conceptual approaches found throughout the music’s evolution. Students involved in jazz performance have numerous opportunities to concertize, participate in master classes, study privately, and to pursue independent projects. They also have the opportunity to participate in academic courses from the music department curriculum that encourage the study of the historical, social, theoretical, stylistic, and creative issues that pertain to the jazz idiom. Princeton’s jazz program, in partnership with the Princeton Public Library, is the proud recipient of a 2006-2007 Looking At: Jazz, America’s Art Form grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in collaboration with Jazz at Lincoln Center, the American Library Association and National Video Resources. The Looking At: Jazz project series explores the cultural and social history of jazz through the presentation of six compelling documentary films, accompanied by viewing and discussion programs, essays by eminent scholars, and live performances for the community that will feature the Princeton University Concert Jazz Ensemble, Swingtet, and Afro-Latin Ensemble.

Presently, the ensemble program features one 17-piece big band and an ever changing variety of small groups, which have included Jazz Composers Collective, Wayne Shorter Ensemble, Afro-Latin Ensemble, Swingtet, Ornette Coleman Ensemble, Ellington/Strayhorn Ensemble, Jazz Messengers Ensemble, Afro-Groove Ensemble, Fusion Ensemble, John Coltrane Ensemble, Horace Silver Ensemble, Ensemble X, New Orleans Ensemble, Jazz Saxophone Quartet, Art Blakey Ensemble, Avant Garde Ensemble, Miles Davis Ensemble, Monk/Mingus Ensemble, Hard Bop Ensemble, Jazztet, and the Jazz Vespers Ensemble. Qualified students have the opportunity to pursue further studies in jazz performance through the Music Department’s Certificate Program in Musical Performance.

In an effort to provide ensemble members with the opportunity to learn from recognized jazz masters, Princeton’s national award-winning jazz program has been fortunate to sponsor master class residencies and feature its ensembles in concert performances with such internationally renowned jazz artists as Clark Terry, Phil Woods, Slide Hampton, Jimmy Heath, Jon Faddis, Oliver Lake, Frank Foster, Benny Carter, Ted Curson, Stanley Jordan, Bobby Watson, Terence Blanchard, Bob Mintzer, Ralph Peterson, Steve Nelson, Antonio Hart, Don Braden, Jacky Terrasson, Jonny King, Walt Weiskopf, Valery Ponomarev, Bryan Carroll, Michael Philip Mossman, Rick Margitza, Ralph Bowen, Mark Gross, Clifford Adams, Jeffery Smith, Guilherme Franco, and Winston Byrd. The program has also been fortunate to feature Dr. Billy Taylor, Victor Lewis, Bill Frisell, Fred Hersch, Roy Hargrove, Hugh Masekela, James Williams, Craig Handy, Conrad Hervig, Jeremy Pelt, Gene Bertoncini, Jim Black, Bruce Williams, and Wilson “Willie Tee” Turbinton as guest lecturers in master class situations.

Over the years, the award-winning Concert Jazz Ensemble has dedicated itself to the performance of the historically significant music of Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn. They have presented such works as: The Far East Suite with the Juilliard Jazz Orchestra; Ellington’s extended orchestral composition, A Tone Parallel to Harlem with the Delaware Valley Philharmonic Orchestra and the Princeton University Orchestra; New World A Comin’ with the Princeton University Orchestra; The Sacred Concert Music of Duke Ellington with the Princeton University Chapel Choir as well as with the University Glee Club and Gospel Ensemble; the all-Strayhorn program of big band music entitled A Lush Life: The Music of Billy Strayhorn, as well as the Ellington/Strayhorn collaborative adaptation of Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s Nutcracker Suite and Edvard Grieg’s Peer Gynt Suites Nos. 1 & 2. The Concert Jazz Ensemble has also been proud to present a number of concerts devoted to the works of guest composers. Such programs have focused on the music of Jimmy Heath, Frank Foster, Slide Hampton, Bob Mintzer, Oliver Lake, Michael Philip Mossman, Bobby Watson, Ralph Bowen, Ted Curson, Ralph Peterson, Jonny King and Walt Weiskopf.

Princeton offers a number of outstanding jazz performance groups. The University Jazz Composers Collective recently traveled to Estonia for a series of concerts sponsored by the Department of State of the United States of America, the U.S. Embassy in Estonia, and the Estonian Academy of Music. The ensemble presented three concerts, including a performance at the Estonian Academy of Music in Tallinn, where they premiered The Eesti Jazz Suite composed by the group’s director, Anthony D.J. Branker during his fall 2005 residency as a U.S. Fulbright Scholar and visiting professor of music at the academy of music. The University Jazz Composers Collective also gave performances at the Geneva Night Club in the city of Narva, which was recorded for broadcast on Estonian National Radio, and at Theatre No. 99 in Tallinn where they featured two sets of original music created by students in the ensemble and were joined by Estonian jazz vocalist Kadri Voorand and guitarist Jaak Sooääär, chair of the jazz department at the academy of music. The Jazz Composers Collective was also featured in performance on Estonian National Television (ETV). In 1999, the University Monk/Mingus Ensemble was named the winner of the 22nd Annual Down Beat magazine Student Music Award for “Best Jazz Instrumental Group” in the college division. Recently, Princeton’s jazz program received its second national award from Down Beat when Ensemble X was chosen as the winner of “Outstanding Performance” honors in the jazz instrumental group category. The Concert Jazz Ensemble has been featured in performance at the International Association for Jazz Education International Conference in Washington, D.C., the National Endowment for the Humanities Paul Robeson Institute at Rutgers University, Down Beat MusicFest U.S.A. National Finals (Oakland, California), and has received numerous awards at intercollegiate jazz festivals held at the University of Notre Dame, Villanova University, and Rowan (Glassboro) University. Recently, the University Afro-Groove Ensemble was featured at the 2004 New Jersey Music Educators Association (NJMEA) State Conference and at the 4th Annual North Texas Jazz Festival with two members of the group receiving “Outstanding Soloist” awards.

Princeton’s jazz program has also produced ten recording projects over the past eighteen years, which include Expanding Horizons (Jazz Composers Collective), Yesternow: The Princeton University Jazz Program 1989-2004 compilation CD.
All About the Groove (Aoro-Groove Ensemble & Fusion Ensemble), Sounds From The Free-Thinking (Monk/Mingus Ensemble) with guest trumpet soloist and former Mingus band member Ted Curson, Music From the Sacred Concerts of Edward Kennedy Ellington (Concert Jazz Ensemble and Chapel Choir), What’s Going On? (Ensemble X), Mosaic (Concert Jazz Ensemble & Hard Bop Ensemble), The Sacred Concert Music of Duke Ellington (Concert Jazz Ensemble, Glee Club and Gospel Ensemble), Mean What You Say (Concert Jazz Ensemble), and 7 Steps 2 Heaven (Concert Jazz Ensemble).

The Conductor

Anthony D.J. Branker is Senior Lecturer in Music and Conductor of University Jazz Ensembles at Princeton University, where he also serves as Associate Director of the Program in Musical Performance. In 2005, he was named a U.S. Fulbright Scholar and visiting professor at the Estonian Academy of Music in Tallinn, Estonia. Mr. Branker has also served as a member of the jazz faculty of the Manhattan School of Music; Professor of Music, Director of Jazz Studies, and Director of Performance Studies at Hunter College of the City University of New York; Chairperson of the Department of Music at Ursinus College, and Instrumental Music Coordinator and Head of Jazz Studies for the New Jersey Summer Arts Institute at Rutgers University. He has been honored by the United States Department of Education with a Presidential Scholars Teacher Recognition Award, the Institute for Arts and Humanities Education Distinguished Teaching Award, the International Association of Jazz Educators Award for Outstanding Service to Jazz Education, and was the recipient of the 2004 Alumni Award presented by the Association of Black Princeton Alumni.

As a composer, Branker has received composition prizes, commissions, served as composer-in-residence, and has had his music featured in performance in Russia, France, Finland, Estonia, Germany, and Lithuania. During his residency at the Estonian Academy of Music, Branker composed The Eesti Jazz Suite, a five-movement work inspired by the culture and people of Estonia. This work was premiered in November of 2006 at the academy of music as part of the concert tour of the Princeton University Jazz Composers Collective, which was sponsored by the Department of State of the United States, the U.S. Embassy in Estonia, and the Estonian Academy of Music. The Jazz Journalists Association recently cited Branker’s Spirit Songs CD project for the Sons of Sound record label as one of the “Top 10 New Jazz Releases for 2006” and his composition “Imani (Faith)” was named one of the “Top 10 Best New Compositions” of the year. The CD recording features performances by saxophonists Antonio Hart and Ralph Bowen, trombonist Clifford Adams Jr., pianist Jonny King, bassist John Benitez, and drummer Ralph Peterson Jr. This recording is available through Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, Borders Books & Music, Tower Records, J&R Music, Best Buy, and iTunes.

As a trumpeter, Branker has performed and recorded with the Spirit of Life Ensemble - including a five-year residency at New York’s internationally renowned “Sweet Basil” jazz club, and has performed at a variety of festivals, concert halls and clubs in the United States and abroad. He has worked in a variety of musical settings with such artists as Ted Curson, Talib Kibwe, Guilherme Franco & Nova Bossa Nova, Michael Cochrane, Steve Nelson, Eddie Henderson, Rick Margitza, Gary Burton, Stanley Jordan, Benny Carter, Ralph Peterson, Terence Blanchard, Roscoe Mitchell, the R&B group Tavares, and has performed in the critically acclaimed Off-Broadway production of Dinah Was: The Dinah Washington Musical.

Mr. Branker has appeared as guest jazz conductor with the Jugend Sinfonie Orchester (Bremen, Germany), Israel’s Kiryat Ono Symphonic Youth Band, Japan’s Fukuji Junior Orchestra, Estonian Academy of Music Big Band (Tallinn, Estonia), New Jersey IAJE Intercollegiate All State Jazz Ensemble, New Jersey IAJE High School Region II All State Jazz Ensemble, and has led performances that have featured the Princeton University Orchestra, Chapel Choir, Glee Club/Concert Choir, and Gospel Ensemble. While at Princeton, Mr. Branker has directed two national award-winning jazz groups, including the Monk/Mingus Ensemble, winner of the Down Beat magazine Student Music Award for “Best Jazz Instrumental Group,” and Ensemble X, recipient of a 2003 Down Beat music award for “Outstanding Performance.”

Professor Branker has received fellowships or grants from the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board/Council for International Exchange of Scholars, the National Endowment for the Humanities, Rutgers Institute of Jazz Studies, and Ursinus College. He has appeared as a lecturer for the Department of Pop & Jazz Music at Helsinki Polytechnic Stadia in Helsinki, Finland; Kuressaare Music Academy on the Estonian island of Saaremaa; the pop/Jazz Program at Viljandi Kultuuriaademia Muusikamajas in Viljandi, Estonia; National Endowment for the Humanities Paul Robeson Institute at Rutgers University; the Princeton University Alumni College Seminar “New Orleans: City of Jazz” in New Orleans, Louisiana; the Plexus Institute; Drew University; and is currently serving as program scholar for the Looking At Jazz, America’s Art Form project series in Princeton during the spring of 2007. Professor Branker is a member of the board of directors of the New Jersey Chapter of the International Association for Jazz Education and the Princeton Symphony Orchestra, in addition to serving on the advisory board of MIMA Music, Inc.

Mr. Branker holds a Master of Music in Jazz Pedagogy from the University of Miami as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Music and a Certificate in African-American Studies from Princeton University. He is currently working towards his Doctorate in Education at Columbia University’s Teachers College.

For a complete listing of all Princeton University Jazz Program concerts for the 2006-2007 season, please visit our website at www.princeton.edu/-puje or Google: “Princeton University Jazz Program”