

Concert as Catalyst:
Duke Ellington's Sacred Concert
and Its Lasting Impact in Phoenix, Arizona

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ABSTRACT

A poster advertising two 1966 performances of Duke Ellington's *First Sacred Concert* at Trinity Cathedral catalyzed research into several storylines that stem from the jazz great's time in Phoenix, Arizona. Ellington's arrival on the weekend of November 10th, 1966, was surrounded by controversy within Trinity Cathedral, the Diocese of Arizona, and the diocesan relationship to the national Episcopal Church. Because Phoenix had recently passed civil rights legislation, race relations remained on unstable footing when Ellington's sacred jazz music—performed by Ellington's black band members—filled the nave of the historic cathedral. This concert stimulated research into Duke Ellington's connection to the Episcopal Church; from Ellington's influential reading of the Episcopal publication *Forward Day by Day* (1935 – current) to his lifelong friendships with Episcopal clergy, his connection to the Episcopal Church illuminates a spirituality that was influenced by a denomination in constant transformation. Rather than homing in on a single topic throughout this work, this study brings together the distinct, but interrelated, spheres of church, artist, jazz, and locale in a politically and socially charged moment in recent history. Informed by documents not before examined, this research adds a new spiritual dimension to the existing Ellington biography and contributes to the local history of Phoenix and Trinity Cathedral in the 1960s.

In memory of Harold Weicker,
whose story will never be lost.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There's no way I would be where I am today without my family. Thank you, Mom, for your 30 years of support and encouragement. To my grandparents and specifically, Molly, for reading pretty much every paper I have written since undergrad—I'm sorry you had to read some bad ones. Jess, I am so thankful that we have gotten to be such a big part of each other's successes, and I can't wait to not work with you. And to the countless teachers, advisors, and mentors I have had over the years, especially Carole, Kay, and Russell, thank you for your guidance throughout this process. I truly could not have done it without you.

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Catalyst /'kad(ə)last/ (noun): an agent that provokes or speeds significant change or action
— Merriam-Webster, 2017

Concert as Catalyst

If someone had asked me a year ago to describe the topic of my terminal document for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree, my immediate answer might have comprised a favorite composer, a theme from a memorable doctoral course, an analysis of a long-loved song cycle—but never the topic at hand. This work describes Duke Ellington's *Sacred Concert*, which he performed at Trinity Cathedral¹ in a Phoenix still struggling with civil rights legislation, a topic that encompasses my city of birth, the Cathedral at which I am employed, an innovative jazz artist whom I have admired since I began playing the saxophone eighteen years ago, and an era in American history that remains close to my heart due to its relevance to race relations during a contentious epoch in United States history.

For this reason, the research that follows exemplifies the concept of *Concert as Catalyst*; specifically, the capacity of a single moment in time—a two-hour concert—to tie together an historical narrative regarding the politics of 1960s Trinity Cathedral; the jazz scene in civil-rights era Phoenix, Arizona; and Duke Ellington's life and career during this decade when he composed his *First Sacred Concert*.

I learned of Duke Ellington's 1966 appearance at Trinity Cathedral while planning the Phoenix Chorale's 2016-17 season. The original Ellington concert poster (Figure 1), which still hangs in the halls of Trinity Cathedral, became the focal point for the Phoenix Chorale's artistic planning committee which proposed that the organization

¹ A cathedral is the head church of a diocese. In this case, Trinity Cathedral is the head of the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona and the seat of the bishop of Arizona. <http://www.azdiocese.org>

could theoretically reproduce Ellington's *Sacred Concert* on the 50th anniversary of his appearance at Trinity Cathedral.



Figure 1. Original Duke Ellington Concert Poster for the *First Sacred Concert* at Trinity Cathedral, Phoenix. Used with permission from Trinity Cathedral, Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries.

Trinity Cathedral has a long history of hosting musical events and, more generally, serving as an artistic “Jewel in the Desert.”² The Episcopal parish, the very first in Arizona, was established in Phoenix in 1885—twenty-seven years before Arizona had secured its statehood—and has stood at its current location on Roosevelt Street in downtown Phoenix since the building’s completion in 1920.³ Over the years, Trinity has been home to some of the region’s best-known church musicians, many coming from all over the United States for their positions.⁴ The Cathedral played host to what is very likely the first boys choir in the state,⁵ housed a Skinner organ (Opus 313) until the 1980s, and was home to the first Oratorio Society in Arizona.⁶ Trinity’s enduring support and celebration of music in Phoenix would lay the foundation for Ellington to bring his concert to the Cathedral on November 10, 1966.

After deciding that it was possible to perform the concerts on the 50th anniversary in 2016, I began exploratory research into the original concert. Beginning with archival copies of the *Arizona Republic*, I found a few articles, reviews, and advertisements regarding Ellington’s weekend stand in Phoenix. Soon after, I had lined up interviews with Canon⁷ Ray Dugan, who was Canon and Cathedral Choir member in

² Richard B. Usher interview conducted by Ryan Downey on October 31, 2016.

³ “Trinity Cathedral History,” last modified October 31, 2016, accessed March 13, 2017, http://trinitycathedral.com/?page_id=365.

⁴ “New Cathedral is Completed,” *Arizona Republic*, October 13, 1914, 6. “Trinity Cathedral Invites Music Lovers of Phoenix to Hear Sacred Oratorio,” *Arizona Republic*, April 4, 1925, 5.

⁵ Trinity Cathedral was consecrated as a Cathedral after its completed construction in April 1921. However, before 1921, Trinity was called a Pro-Cathedral or Church, and for a time in the late 1980s had been downgraded to the status of a mission. For this document, Cathedral will be used interchangeably with “Trinity Cathedral” and “Trinity” regardless of date.

⁶ “Oratorio Society Organization has Promising Future,” *Arizona Republican*, December 17, 1922, A12.

⁷ An ordained minister that is an appointed assistant to the Dean of a church, in this case, Trinity Cathedral. Canons can be referred to as “The Reverend.”

Ellington's *Sacred Concert* at Trinity, and Richard B. Usher, the son of Trinity's Dean⁸ in the 1960s. Both provided a wealth of information about the concert, as well as the atmosphere in both Trinity and Phoenix more broadly in the 1960s.

Concurrent with these interviews, I began research at Arizona State University's *Arizona Collection*, which houses both the Trinity Cathedral Records 1884-1993 and the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona Records 1880-2003. These records contained detailed information on the parishioners of Trinity Cathedral, events of the diocese, and most importantly, the "Duke Ellington Folder" containing an original program, correspondence regarding the concert, and documents ranging from an "Income Study" to a church newsletter released the Sunday following the two original performances.

These discoveries served, once again, as a catalyst for additional revelations into politics, both in the Episcopal Church and in the United States. From the details on one dusty poster in the halls of Trinity, a story was beginning to unravel. A history of small anecdotes about Ellington's concert, the 1964 Presidential campaign, and a topic as broad and tangled as race in Phoenix began to emerge. Though the stories of any one of these topics is enough to fill books, the story told here is unique in that it is the story of a single city—a single parish—that ties each of these themes together in a single moment in time.

A seemingly final catalytic event took place upon reading Duke Ellington's autobiography, *Music is My Mistress*.⁹ While reminiscing about the beginnings of the *Sacred Concerts*, Ellington attributes a significant part of the musical number "Freedom" to his daily reading of the small, Episcopal publication *Forward Day by Day*.

⁸ At a Cathedral, the Dean is the clergy member in charge of all operations and are referred to as "The Very Reverend."

⁹ Edward Kennedy Ellington, *Music is My Mistress* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1973).

The Ellington Collection, housed in the Archives Center of the National Museum of American History, contains fifteen annotated copies of *Forward*—only a small collection of the dozens of issues he read from the mid-1950s until his death. Ellington’s notes and annotations in *Forward* underscore his spirituality, the fundamental theme underlying his *Sacred Concerts*, and their inherent link to the Episcopal Church.

More than anything, what has emerged from these discoveries is a point that should not be overlooked: that is the necessity for understanding not just music’s place in history, but the importance of *context* surrounding both musical and historical moments. Moments that tie the two subjects together and inform future generations of music scholars and listeners alike. Just as music lives best through the generations if it is performed, we must retell the history that so dynamically catalyzes musical creation and event. For these reasons, I dedicate this work to the spirit of inclusion that made the appearance of one of America’s best-known musicians, composers, and bandleaders in recently integrated Phoenix possible, while highlighting his ties to the Episcopal Church and the revolutionary blending of jazz and spirituality. Although Duke Ellington’s *Sacred Concerts* have become some of his most enduring works, the stories that capture and immortalize his November 10, 1966, appearance at Trinity Cathedral have uncovered a story that has yet to be told.

Trinity's Changing Environment

Duke Ellington's 1966 arrival in Phoenix occurred at a fascinating time for Trinity Cathedral¹⁰ and the city of Phoenix more broadly. During the mid-1960s, several landmark events took place that changed the landscape of Trinity Cathedral and Phoenix for decades to come: Barry Goldwater, one of Arizona's senators and life-long member of Trinity Cathedral, would run for President and lose; the families that once filled downtown Phoenix and the halls of the Cathedral continued to move out of downtown Phoenix, creating a need for revitalization; and Phoenix would pass civil rights legislation.

Historically, the congregation of Trinity Cathedral was quite politically conservative. Upon Ellington's arrival, St. Mary's Basilica and Trinity Cathedral would be two of only a handful of churches left in central downtown Phoenix. During the late 1940s and throughout the '50s, Trinity's families—like many others in downtown—began to move outside the city center. All Saints' Episcopal Church, established in 1948 to accommodate the Trinity families who lived north of Camelback Road, was built on what was then the far northern stretches of Phoenix—around Central Avenue and Bethany Home Road.¹¹ Over the next fifteen years, as the white flight to the suburbs continued, Trinity, like many of the buildings in downtown Phoenix, fell into physical disrepair and its congregation was on the brink of moving. This move never materialized and Trinity Cathedral still stands where it was built in 1920.

¹⁰ A church that holds, and acts as, the Bishop's seat of a specific diocese. If needed, the Episcopal Church's website houses a helpful glossary of church terms which can be found at <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/library/glossary>.

¹¹ "Our History," All Saints' Episcopal Church, accessed January 12, 2017, <http://allsaints-phoenix.org/who-we-are/history>.

To set the stage—culturally and historically—for Duke Ellington’s arrival in 1960s Phoenix, it is worth examining in depth a few of the events that shaped Trinity Cathedral, the relationship of its parish to the city of Phoenix, and the Cathedral’s national reputation.

The Letter and Barry Goldwater

Barry Goldwater, born in Phoenix, Arizona, in 1909, was a long-time member of Trinity Cathedral. Baptized at what was then Trinity parish in 1911,¹² he remained a member of the Cathedral for much of his life. As a young man, he became president of his family’s famous department store, Goldwater’s—a shopping hub of mid-century metropolitan Phoenix. A young man who was interested in politics and local government, he quickly moved through the Phoenix City Council and was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1952, and subsequently reelected senator in 1958.¹³ Although Goldwater and his family became members of another Episcopal congregation after his time in Washington D.C., he remained in contact with the clergy and congregation of Trinity Cathedral for the remainder of his life and the Cathedral served as the site of his public visitation on June 3, 1998.¹⁴

In 1964, in the midst of his battle with Lyndon B. Johnson for the office of President of the United States, Barry Goldwater was accused by hundreds of Episcopal clergy and laypeople of “transparent exploitation of racism among white citizens.”¹⁵ This

¹² “Goldwater’s Body To Be Cremated; Funeral Set For Wednesday,” *All Politics*, June 2, 1998 accessed March 15, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/1998/06/02/goldwater.funeral/>.

¹³ “Barry Goldwater,” *Encyclopædia Britannica* accessed March 15, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Barry-Goldwater>.

¹⁴ Michael Murphy, “Conservative Conscience Dead at 89,” *Arizona Republic*, May 30, 1998, BG1-4.

¹⁵ Frank Starzel, “Public Affairs: In the Wings, Conscience,” *The Living Church*, October 25, 1964, 6.

charge from his fellow Episcopalians would set off a series of events that would last until Election Day which took place only three weeks after the accusations arose.

Like the nation as a whole, the Episcopal Church was split on the issue of racial integration which had taken place from the late-1950s to the mid-1960s. Most of the infighting was over the topic of integration of Episcopal churches and schools, mostly in the South. The Church “would remain sadly divided over the meaning of the civil rights movement,” for decades until 1965 when the church found some amount of common ground on race relations between Episcopalians.¹⁶

The 61st General Convention of the Episcopal Church (1964) was held during the height of the civil rights movement and occurred only weeks before the presidential election. Presiding Bishop Arthur Lichtenberger, preached the opening service of the General Convention, during which he spoke out against racial injustice and for clergy and laypeople, “to step out into the world and involve themselves in politics and in the fight against injustice.”¹⁷ Lichtenberger wanted his sermon on race and its place in the Episcopal Church to be the first and last time the subject was broached at the convention. However, his opinions of the Church’s necessary involvement in politics was not shared by everyone and race relations and civil rights would remain a salient topic throughout the remainder of the 1964 General Convention.¹⁸

Before the General Convention, and unbeknownst to Goldwater and his staff, a statement by lay theologian, William Stringfellow, had been circulated to Episcopal churches across the country, accusing presidential nominee Barry Goldwater of racism. Frank Starzel of the *Living Church* reported, “The 1964 Presidential campaign was

¹⁶ Gardiner H. Shattuck Jr., *Episcopalians and Race: Civil War to Civil Rights* (The University of Kentucky Press, 2000), 133.

¹⁷ Gardiner H. Shattuck Jr., *Episcopalians and Race*, 144.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 144.

injected into the wings of the General Convention, by William Stringfellow, New York attorney and prominent layman. Mr. Stringfellow had released his ‘Statement of Conscience’ in which he accused Goldwater and his running mate of their ‘transparent appeal to racism.’”¹⁹

The statement was born out of resentment for Goldwater’s stance, or lack thereof, on the Civil Rights Acts of 1964. Throughout the campaign, Goldwater had been effectively linked to the continued success and growth of racist white Republicans, especially in the southern states. Goldwater opposed the Civil Rights Act outright and claimed that his stance was more a “commitment to states’ rights,” than racism.²⁰ This stance was detrimental to his campaign. Goldwater despised the idea that his view on the Civil Rights Act was seen as a ploy to sweep the southern states, but his inability to address his stance intellectually, and his inexperience with the African American community in general, lead to the stereotyping of Barry Goldwater as racist.²¹

Starzel also reports that “Mr. Stringfellow said his purpose in presenting the statement at the Convention hall was to dramatize the protest against the campaign tactics of fellow Episcopalian, Senator Barry Goldwater, and his running mate, Congressman William Miller, who is a Roman Catholic.”²² Bishop James Pike of California and professors from six of the Episcopal seminaries, including Church Divinity School of the Pacific, were just a few of the 726 signatories from 41 states. Though the circulation of the Statement occurred at the General Convention, and was

¹⁹ Frank Starzel, “Public Affairs: Comments by Leaders,” *The Living Church*, October 25, 1964, 7.

²⁰ Peter Iverson, *Barry Goldwater: Native Arizonan* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 121.

²¹ Peter Iverson, *Barry Goldwater*, 122.

²² Starzel, “Public Affairs: Comments by Leaders,” *The Living Church*, October 25, 1964, 7.

reported as an official statement, it is worth noting that it was never sponsored or supported publically by the Episcopal Church.²³

Conservative Episcopalians were outraged by Stringfellow's Statement and wanted formal action to be taken against his actions. The Episcopal church was called upon to conduct a formal investigation into Stringfellow's actions. A special committee of the House of Deputies of the Episcopal Church was established and quickly returned with a statement denouncing Stringfellow. However, "despite this censure and the criticism he received, Stringfellow expressed satisfaction with his mission; he had succeeded not only in calling attention to the implications of racism in the Goldwater campaign, but also in exposing some of the hypocrisy about politics among Episcopal leaders."²⁴

As one can imagine, Goldwater and his camp were not pleased with Stringfellow's Statement, its issuance so close to Election Day, and the fact that nearly 800 of Goldwater's own Episcopal Church body had signed the document in protest of his political stances. In a hostile reply to Stringfellow's Statement, the Senior and Junior Wardens and the Vestry of Trinity Cathedral issued what is catalogued in the Trinity Cathedral Records as *The Letter*.

The Letter, dated 20 October, 1964 and addressed "Dear Rector and Vestrymen," was sent to hundreds of Episcopal churches throughout the United States and was intended to be read to congregations merely a week-and-a-half before Election Day, "To rectify a malevolent and unfounded charge of racism made against our fellow

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Gardiner H. Shattuck Jr., *Episcopalians and Race*: 145.

parishioner, Senator Barry Goldwater, from within our own church, we respectfully request that you read at all services on the coming Sunday the following statement:"²⁵

Fellow Episcopalians,

Recently a document was released at the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in St. Louis, without the sanction of or foreknowledge of the official Convention. Allegedly it included among its signatories numerous Episcopal clergymen and laymen. It purported to accuse a member of our congregation, Senator Barry Goldwater, of racism or the usage of racial issues for political gain. The release of this document at this time and place was, without question, designed to surreptitiously create the impression via news releases throughout our nation that our Church endorsed it and its malignant implications.

We now feel compelled to speak out in defense of an honorable and Christian individual whom we know and respect, with considerably more basis in fact than any other area or group in this nation can claim.

Senator Goldwater has for many years been a loyal, active member of Trinity Cathedral Parish in Phoenix. His stewardship has been both constant and generous in the furtherance of God's influence in our community through our church program. Where others have spoken only, Senator Goldwater has acted in support of the Christian needs and individual dignity of fellow Arizonans.

To equate racism with a man who, through boyhood, camped many summers in close fellowship with men and boys of all races in the Phoenix Young Men's Christian Association camp program—who is an acknowledged authority on the life and culture of American Indians of the Southwest from having spent literally months of accumulated time with them—is an assumption in great error. Bigotry in any form, and the nature and conscience of Senator Goldwater are as incompatible as slavery and freedom, of Communism and Democracy, or specifically racial prejudice and Christianity.

The soul and conscience of a man are God's arena, and cannot be usurped by any mortal setting himself up as a judge of another human being. Senator Goldwater has, far better than most of us, shown the people of this country a Christian stature beyond challenge.

Those men within our Church who have maligned him, and attempted to sit in judgement of him, have breached one of the basic precepts of our Christian teaching. We commend to them Matthew 7, 1-2: Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

The Vestry, Trinity Cathedral²⁶

²⁵ Hennen Forman, Derrick B. Manley M.D., and The Vestry of Trinity Cathedral to Rector, Vestrymen and Fellow Episcopalians, 20 October, 1964, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries, MSS-138, box 7, folder 11.

²⁶ Hennen Forman, Derrick B. Manley M.D., and The Vestry of Trinity Cathedral to Rector, Vestrymen and Fellow Episcopalians, 20 October, 1964.

It is unknown whether *The Letter* was sent with any prompting by Goldwater or his camp, or whether it was intended for any political gain, but its release created a considerable amount of backlash from the national Episcopal community. The following three letters, selected from the Trinity Cathedral Records, highlight some of the sentiments of the Episcopal clergy who received the Vestry's letter and provide more detail into Stringfellow's Statement against Barry Goldwater.

Gentlemen:

I have received your letter of October 20th. Never in my life and ministry of 18 years do I recall having been asked by the vestry of another parish to read a letter which was so patently political the Sunday before an election.

Mr. Stringfellow's letter, to which you refer, was not released at the General Convention and as you well know, had no connection whatsoever with the General Convention. It was, of course, released in St. Louis at the time of the Convention, but was said of by the author, himself, not to be thought of as the kind of material germane to the action of that legislative body.

At the time of the original circulation of that letter I was a professor in one of our church's oldest seminaries (Bexley Hall). Two other faculty members and I signed that letter in good conscience and out of deep conviction. It is true that even in the heat of a presidential campaign Mr. Goldwater has, by and large, acquitted himself nobly and has done as little as possible to raise morally and ethically questionable issues. Nevertheless, Mr. Stringfellow—excellent lawyer and articulate lay theologian that he is—was more right than wrong, it seems to me, when he referred to the eager manner in which your friend and fellow parishioner accepted the backing of such a widely known racist as Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, to name but one.

In view of the above-mentioned facts, I am sure that you can see that it would be impossible for me to accede to the request that I read your letter at the services at Emmanuel Church.

Sincerely,

The Rev. F. Morgan Smith, S.T.M.

P.S.

Dear George: I have received that ridiculous epistle from your wardens and vestry and I am so glad that I am not in your shoes.

Morgan²⁷

²⁷ The Reverend F. Morgan Smith, S.T.M. to the Wardens and Vestry of Trinity Cathedral, 31 October, 1964, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries, MSS-138, box 7, folder 11.

Reverend Smith's reaction resonates with other episcopal clergy, as does his postscript, as Dean Selway of Trinity would receive many condolences for having to deal with such a situation. The next letter shares many of the same sentiments as Reverend Smith's.

Dear Mr. Forman

Thank you for your letter of October 20.

Before the General Convention ended, the Bishop and the Suffragan Bishops of South Florida sent a communication to the clergy of this diocese clarifying the Church's position in relation to the Stringfellow statement. This communication was read at all services at St. David's by the Sea and I am quite sure that the people in this parish, who were present at those services, know that Mr. Stringfellow's statement had no connection with the General Convention of this Church. No further statement will be read.

There are one or two things about your letter which concern me, however. I am speaking as an individual. If your statement is an official communique from the Vestry of Trinity Cathedral, why didn't Bishop Harte or Dean Selway sign it? If 'the soul and conscience of a man are God's arena, and cannot be usurped by any mortal setting himself up as a judge of another human being', why does the good Senator from Arizona presume to judge the character of the President of the United States? This morning I received in the mail an assortment of filth from a person who signs his name as A. G. Hill, c/o The Seven Falls Company, Colorado Springs, Colorado, and in the numerous pamphlets enclosed, this gentleman maligns the character of the President of the United States and urges the reader to vote for Senator Goldwater. Why hasn't the Senator repudiated the hate groups in this country which have so warmly supported him? This stuff arrives in my mail nearly every day from the John Birch Society, The Christian Anti-Communism Crusade, the 20 Century Reformation Hour, Edgar Bundy, etc., ad nauseum.

Yours very truly,

Frank M. Butler
Copy: Dean Selway²⁸

The last and most virulent letter arrived all the way from Florida and was copied to Trinity's Dean and the Bishop of Arizona, Joseph M. Harte.

²⁸ Frank M. Butler to Mr. Hennen Forman, Senior Warder, 29 October, 1964, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries, MSS-138, box 7, folder 11.

26th, October, 1964

Wardens:

I can assure you that I not only WILL NOT read your infamous letter to my congregation, but assure you that your action has decided me on the way I shall vote. I must admit that I had qualms about the choice, as I prefer to vote for neither man running for the Presidency, BUT your use of your position and Cathedral stationary and postage to promote a political candidate is even more infamous than the action of those at the General Convention who issues the statement which you vilify. It was made most clear by all of the authorities at General Convention that the statement was no part of the convention.

What really decided me was the fact that so many of our church have to count every penny, and our clergy as well, and then to see such a gross misappropriation of funds given to Christ and his Church to further the personal ambitions of one such as you propose is absolutely beyond my ken.

This election campaign has ABSOLUTELY NO PLACE IN THE CHURCH, for I personally agree with the views of Dean Sayre – i.e. a plague on both your houses – though I disagree with the place that he said it. As a person who was raised a Republican in the Middle West and who always has abhorred the thought of voting for a Democrat, I thank you for making my task next Tuesday so very much easier though still unpalatable. I am almost tempted were it not so late in the season to organize a Republicans for Johnson or Christians for Johnson Club.

I can assure you that I have every intention of sending your letter to friends at Trinity Cathedral who will be most interested in the waste of Christ's funds, and your abysmal stewardship of the same.

Faithfully,
C. A. Sunderland
Vicar²⁹

A few more details regarding the events that took place before the Presidential election are illuminated by the Trinity Cathedral Vestry Minutes from the dates before and after *The Letter* was mailed. The Vestry minutes dated October 20, 1966, give insight to one of the issues that the correspondence from C.A. Sunderland raised—that the Vestry and Wardens of Trinity Cathedral used church funds to send *The Letter*. That accusation is apparently untrue, as the Vestry Minutes state that, “expense of this

²⁹ C. A. Sunderland, Vicar to the Senior and Junior Wardens of Trinity, 26 October, 1964, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries, MSS-138, box 7, folder 11.

operation will be taken care of by individuals and not by the parish.”³⁰ The motion to send *The Letter* was issued by the Junior Warden, Dr. Manley, and does not seem to have any financial connection with the Goldwater campaign. The Vestry Minutes of November 5th, 1964, provide the last amount of detail—that “Bishop Harte expressed approval of the action of the vestry in sending out *The Letter* indicating our belief that Senator Goldwater is not a racist.”³¹

Race was a major issue in the 1964 election, and, after the dust settled, Barry Goldwater would only win 6 states, five of which were southern, and the sixth—Arizona. Goldwater’s relationship with race was complicated. In a recent interview, Matthew C. Whitaker, author of *Race Work: The Rise of Civil Rights in the Southwest*, described Goldwater’s relationship to Phoenix’s black community as, “interesting.”³² He continued to explain the connection saying,

I know that there were a lot of black leaders that struck up independent relationships [with Barry Goldwater]—Lincoln Ragsdale, for instance, and Barry Goldwater were close friends. Their friendship wasn’t unheard of, particularly because most black leaders were Republicans at that time, and were very involved in politics, particularly if they were entrepreneurial at all. And even someone like a Goldwater...that was quite conservative in orientation, but had a libertarian bend, meaning that Goldwater himself was, actually, very interested in equality and access on the ground and locally, and could have conversations with black folks, Latinos too, about their beefs—their concerns. He actually gave money to the Civil Rights Movement here [Phoenix].³³

At the time of the November Vestry meeting, Barry Goldwater’s loss would have already been decided and the Cathedral needed to quickly move past the controversy spurred on by *The Letter*. Within a week, Trinity Cathedral would be welcoming a new Dean—a Dean who would become known for his liberal theology and social proclivities,

³⁰ Vestry minutes, 20 October, 1964, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries.

³¹ Vestry minutes, 5 November 1964, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries; “To Rectify a Charge,” *The Living Church*, November 8, 1964, 1.

³² Matthew C. Whitaker, interview conducted by Ryan Downey on January 18, 2017.

³³ Matthew C. Whitaker, interview conducted by Ryan Downey on January 18, 2017.

and who throughout his ensuing twenty-year tenure, would often quarrel with the generally conservative congregation. Not only did *The Letter* bring national, and unfavorable, recognition to Trinity Cathedral, but the written responses to this letter were filled with vitriol and biting cynicism. This infamous recognition would reach their next Dean, Elmer B. Usher, in Detroit, Michigan, and would almost lead him to reject his call from Trinity's Dean Selway.

Elmer B. Usher – The New Dean

It was this significant transition of power—specifically, the hiring and arrival of a new Dean, Elmer B. Usher—that added to the shifting landscape of Trinity Cathedral and downtown Phoenix. In the summer of 1964, Trinity Cathedral's Dean, George R. Selway, was elected to his future post of Bishop of Northern Michigan. This left a vacancy for the position of Dean at Trinity, which was to be filled by the Very Reverend Elmer B. Usher on Friday the 13th of November, 1964—just after the fallout from *The Letter* and Barry Goldwater's loss to Lyndon Johnson.

Bishop Selway knew Usher, to whom many commonly referred as “Tip,” from their days together in Michigan and thought he would be a good candidate for Dean at the physically failing and deteriorating urban Cathedral. At the time of his call, Elmer B. Usher was working as Rector of Mariners Church in downtown Detroit. Usher had held the position of Rector at Mariners since 1955, when his family relocated to the city. In interviews, Tip's son, Richard, lovingly refers to Mariners Church as, “the downtownest downtown church in America,”³⁴ because of its truly urban location with few surrounding neighborhoods or community.

³⁴ Richard B. Usher interview conducted by Ryan Downey on October 31, 2016.

Usher worked over the next nine years to build up a parish that when he began as Rector, was struggling financially and physically and had a small, almost nonexistent church membership. He built Mariners into a thriving church that not only reached an increased membership every Sunday, but whose broadcasts on WWJ radio ran throughout the week. During his tenure, Tip also “oversaw the relocation, restoration and rebuilding of the oldest stone church in Michigan; it was literally cribbed, rigged, and dragged 880 feet across the civic plaza to its new two-story foundation and current location...just above the tunnel under the Detroit River to Windsor, Ontario.”³⁵

It was this pedigree for rebuilding, reconstruction, and revitalization that became increasingly important to Trinity Cathedral and, in the end, earned the call from the Cathedral and its vestry. Whether intentional or not, the relatively conservative church had hired a Dean with a liberal disposition. In Detroit, Usher and his family were friends with some of the most prominent leftist leaders like union leader, Walter Reuther and liberal governor, Gerhard Mennen "Soapy" Williams. This was an interesting choice, as the man whom they had hired was one of the more liberal, progressive, and sometimes hardheaded Deans in Trinity Cathedral's history.

In a recent interview with Elmer Usher's son, Richard Usher retold the story of his family's move from Detroit to Phoenix.

I didn't know where we were going. I was in high school at the time and we were driving through Nebraska in the station wagon. We didn't listen to the radio a lot, but we happened to be listening to the radio at the time, and Bob Hope came and he was doing a monologue and talked about the future of the country after the election and the results. Part of his monologue was, "I had gone to the Doctor to see about my sinus problems and he said I had some allergies and I needed to dry my sinuses out, why didn't I go to Arizona?" and Bob said, "I didn't want to leave the country!" And at the time I was confused as to what that punchline meant and my father began to explain where we were headed, because I was coming from Detroit, a very union town. We were friends of Walter Reuther, "Soapy" Williams, who was the Governor—and I wondered where we were going.³⁶

³⁵ Richard B. Usher, "Memorial," program notes, Phoenix Chorale, December 16-20, 2016.

³⁶ Richard B. Usher interview.

Even within the first few months of Dean Usher's arrival, controversies arose between the Dean and influential laypeople in the parish. Some of these disputes would last until his retirement in 1987. An example of one of the events that caused some upheaval was a service that Dean Usher held in June, 1965—a memorial for Civil Rights activist Medgar Evers. Evers, a World War II veteran and civil rights leader from Mississippi, was ambushed and killed in front of his home in 1963.³⁷ Evers gained national prominence after his death and would have been an unexpected subject of a memorial for a white, conservative church like Trinity and the city of Phoenix, which was in the midst of passing its own civil rights legislation. More controversies followed the Dean throughout his tenure—even Duke Ellington's concerts caused a certain amount of disagreement in the Trinity community.

This excerpt from a recent memorial written by the Usher family helps to understand Dean Elmer Usher further,

His gifts were rich and varied. Tip was tough and could be hard headed, but he was also gentle, caring, generous and loving. He was often an iconoclast, almost a rebel and seemed invincible. Tip's compassion, devotion to God, passion for service to others, and clarity about priorities were demonstrated as a father, friend, vicar, rector, dean, patriarch, prophet, and pastor. He never worshiped the church and its human systems. He was strong and brilliant, with enormous energy, clear convictions and a great dedication to the life and mission of the church. He had the courage to give himself vigorously to the Christian virtues of social justice and peace. He was a social liberal whose prophetic voice brought contemporary perspective to the Old Testament and a vision of the Gospels preaching with passion and clarity about equality, diversity and inclusiveness. He believed in an abundant church reaching outside its walls offering more than lip service to the poor and the oppressed. He lamented a church that had lapsed into an individualistic and self-serving piety, failing to take responsibility for Lazarus suffering at the gate. In his final sermon as Dean of Trinity Cathedral, he said, "Centering on self is an agonizing life; it is slow death for it kills the potential created by God."³⁸

³⁷ *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "Medgar Evers," accessed March 13, 2017, <http://academic.eb.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/levels/collegiate/article/Medgar-Evers/33366>.

³⁸ Richard B. Usher, "Memorial," program notes, Phoenix Chorale, December 16-20, 2016.

A few of Dean Usher's contributions to Trinity can still be seen today, including the thirteen stained-glass windows that adorn the length of the nave and the two rose windows at the north and south ends of the Cathedral. The colorful, unusual stained glass windows, all but one designed by Glidden Parker, have led many to call Trinity Cathedral a "Jewel in the Desert."³⁹ Ultimately, the Dean's tenure would end in controversy and lead to a forced dismissal less than five years before the Episcopal Church's mandatory retirement age. The controversy would tarnish a legacy that spanned over 20 years and added much to Trinity's physical and social standing in downtown Phoenix.

The Bishop Pike Controversy

Less than a year after the wake of *The Letter* was distributed to parishes throughout the U.S., Barry Goldwater's unsuccessful bid for the presidency, and the arrival of Trinity's liberal Dean, Trinity Cathedral and the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona found itself entrenched in another national controversy. Though the controversy was not as focused on Trinity and its membership as the events surrounding *The Letter*, it was nonetheless an issue that caused months of bickering throughout the Arizona Diocese and garnered responses from clergy and laypeople from across the country. The events surrounding Bishop Pike would lead to a difficult choice for Dean Elmer Usher; either he was to stand in favor of his progressive views or acquiesce to the conservative views of his church members.

Another storyline links *The Bishop Pike Controversy* to Trinity Cathedral, Bishop Pike, and the Episcopal Church in general. Almost congruent with the events that were about to take place in Arizona, Duke Ellington was planning to premiere his *First Sacred*

³⁹ Richard B. Usher interview.

Concert at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco which serves as the seat of the Bishop of the Diocese of California—then Bishop James Pike. The following events, no doubt, had an impact on the way the clergy and laypeople of Grace Cathedral imagined the Diocese of Arizona in 1965.

By the mid-1960s, Bishop James Pike had become one of the most controversial figures in the Episcopal church. Educated as a lawyer and ordained in 1946, Pike brought much of his training in logic and argumentation to his role as a teacher, theologian, and Bishop. In the early 1950s, as Dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, Pike's theological position "was nothing more or less or other than the conventional, generally accepted teachings of the Episcopal Church."⁴⁰ At St. John the Divine, Dean Pike's sermons on topics ranging from his personal theological ideals to controversial topics such as social justice, often attracted congregations of 4,000 to the cathedral's 10,000-person capacity.⁴¹

Pike's personal theological doctrine remained compatible with the principles of the Episcopal Church until the 1960s. In his book "The Bishop Pike Affair," William Stringfellow cites an article that Pike wrote in 1959 called "Three-Pronged Synthesis," which signaled the Bishop's theological turning point,

containing as it does, seminally, most of the doctrinal skepticism that was to emerge in ensuing years in his public expressions. In the article can be found, tentatively stated, disenchantment with classical doctrine on the Trinity, the Virgin Birth, and Salvation through Christ alone...The article was composed in that style of jaunty irreverence and putative vulgarity for which the Bishop has become noted.⁴²

In addition to these seemingly irreverent views on the Trinity and Virgin Birth, Bishop Pike supported LGBT rights, desegregation, and the ordination of women in the church.

⁴⁰ William Stringfellow and Anthony Towne, *The Bishop Pike Affair: Scandals of Conscience and Heresy, Relevance and Solemnity in the Contemporary Church* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 9.

⁴¹ William Stringfellow and Anthony Towne, *The Bishop Pike Affair*, 9.

⁴² *Ibid.*

In December 1960, Bishop Pike’s “Three-Pronged Synthesis” was circulated in *The Christian Century* and received “swift, widespread, highly publicized, and often vehement,”⁴³ criticism, which eventually led to accusations and charges of heresy. Similar charges were brought against Bishop Pike on August 14th, 1965 by fourteen conservative Arizona clergy members. The harsh letter, which was addressed to—and later forwarded to the national Episcopal Church by—Arizona Bishop, the Right Reverend Joseph Meaken Harte, accused Pike of heresy on eight specific points. The following excerpt from an article entitled “Heresy Charges Denied” from the August – September 1965 issue of *Pacific Churchman* outlines the charges brought by the Arizona clergy (in quotation marks) and Bishop Pike’s responses to each point.

1. “Bishop Pike of California will bring his plan to ordain women to the Sacred Ministry of the Church before the Bishops.” This is not my plan; but was adopted unanimously by the General Convention in 1964 and I have simply submitted three subsidiary questions of interpretation for the counsel of my brother Bishops.
2. “Bishop Pike has repudiated our Lord’s Virgin birth.” Literal belief in the nativity narrative, which form a late layer of material in two of the later Gospels, is not required to be affirmed in our Church...
3. “In his own cathedral, we understand, the Feast of the Annunciation is not celebrated.” This festival, which focuses on a meaningful myth, is regularly celebrated, though it usually falls on a weekday, at Grace Cathedral...including Chorale Matins and a Choral Eucharist...I doubt if many other of the 8000 Episcopal Churches in Arizona or elsewhere have full choral services on this day.
4. “He has denied the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity.” As is clear from “A Time for Christian Candor” I regard as unintelligible and misleading to men of our day the classical formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity...
5. “He has denied...the Incarnation, claiming that Christ was divine as all men are, except that he was peculiarly conscious of his relationship to God (which is the Unitarian position).” Whether or not this is a correct statement of Unitarianism (I do not think so; but I am not an expert on Unitarian theology), it bears no relationship to my stated positions.
6. “He also maintains that the Incarnation was not unique in Jesus, but had occurred in other great religious leaders before His time.” I have in no public sermon or article ever states that an Incarnation had occurred in any other religious leader before or after Jesus’ time.
7. He denies the empty tomb and the bodily Resurrection and Ascension.” In none of my writings have I denied the empty tomb; I have fully affirmed the Resurrection in **A Time For Christian Candor** (p. 119); as to the mode of Resurrection, I find most satisfactory the “spiritual body” approach of St. Paul in 1 Cor. 15, written earlier than the Gospel accounts. Incidentally, the

⁴³ Ibid.

Ascensions in any other terms would be an incongruity in a post-Copernican view of the universe.

8. “He denies that the Creeds contain articles of faith at all.” Of course the Creed contains articles of faith—my faith, and of the faith of the Church—proclaimed in plain English in **A Time for Christian Candor**, and in my other writings, sermons, and addresses.

I have spoken and written openly; I stand on the record.⁴⁴

This excerpt offers a look into the views of the Arizona clergy and Bishop Pike, revealing great fissures in beliefs and interpretation of Christian and Episcopalian doctrine.

Though no clergy from Trinity were included in the fourteen men who wrote the letter, it is significant that Dean Usher stood on the side of the Bishop Pike of California, which caused a flood praise and criticism locally and throughout the U.S. It is important to note here that on page three of the same issue of *Pacific Churchman*, Ellington’s *First Sacred Concert* was announced.

In a written rebuke of the fourteen Arizona clergy, dated August 20th, 1965, and later published and reported in newspapers around the country, Dean Elmer Usher writes the following:

Controversy within the Church, as in any fellowship or family, is always self-destroying. I am concerned about the image of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Arizona and in the Nation; and I am saddened by the petition signed by fourteen clergy of this Diocese and forwarded by Bishop Harte..., asking that Bishop Pike make public repudiation of certain teaching the signers of the petition consider erroneous and strange, and asking that if Bishop Pike does not recant that he be tried for heresy.

It is rather clear that these fourteen Arizona clergy have panicked because the security of their rigidity has failed them. To them, and some more, there is failure to decide between truth and the way in which truth is communicated. There is significance in the fact that the “normal” clergy leadership of the Diocese of Arizona took no part in the petition, for they have too much common sense and deep understanding of the inclusiveness of the Anglican position to join in a heresy hunt.

I have no urge to brand Bishop Pike as a heretic nor brand the fourteen Arizona clergy as inept for their medieval minds, or their venerable conformity to “orthodoxy.” I am sure, however, that if the views of the fourteen Arizona clergy were the test of Church membership, and if all those in the Church were coerced to conform to their “orthodox” teachings or be branded as heretics, then

⁴⁴ “Heresy Is Charged to Diocesan,” *Pacific Churchman: Diocese of California* 95, no. 13 (August-September, 1965).

conscience would demand leaving the Church and searching for the truth of the spirit elsewhere.

Absolute conformity to creedal statement does not necessarily make Christians...

The great task facing the Christian Church today is not the articulation of precise, clear, and deadly “orthodoxy”, but the Christ-like ethical judgments of the things of this world as they relate to the sociological patterns involving race, housing, hunger, sex, war and peace.

It is ironical that Bishop Pike is a leading force in the Church for justice, righteousness, and love and yet is being attacked for those virtues which by any standard of objectivity are Christian.

The present Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Michael Ramsey, in his pamphlet Image Old and New, (and I assume it safe to quote him) wrote: “As a Church we need to be grappling with the questions and trials of belief in the modern world. Since the [Second World] war our Church has been too inclined to be concerned with the organizing of its own life, perhaps assuming too easily that the faith may be taken for granted and needs only to be stated and commended. But we state and commend the faith only in so far as we go out and put ourselves with loving sympathy inside the doubts of the doubting, the questions of the questioners, and the loneliness of those who have lost their way.”

It appears that this is what Bishop Pike is doing while the fourteen Arizona clergy are willing and able only to give old answers to old questions that the people are not even asking.⁴⁵

As one can imagine, Dean Usher’s polarizing statement was met with both outrage and support from within Trinity Cathedral and in larger Episcopal circles throughout the U.S. The Dean’s pro-Pike stance confirmed what was already becoming common knowledge at Trinity—that Usher was more liberal than many in the relatively conservative church may have known.

Responses to the Dean’s statement of support came in one of two forms; first was the pro-Pike and Usher stance, commending the Dean for his stance against the fourteen clergy; second was the pro-Arizona clergy stance, berating the Dean for his support of the rightfully controversial Bishop. The next seven letters are taken from the Trinity

⁴⁵ Statement by The Very Reverend Elmer B. Usher, “An Important Statement from Arizona!” 20 August, 1965, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries, MSS-138, box 5, folder 3.

Cathedral Records. The first three letters will highlight support for the Dean, and the last four will underline the points of opposition the Dean faced.

Dear Tip:

Just a word to commend you on the statement you made in the newspapers regarding the Pike matter. It is a shame that a priest like Brunton, who never served the Diocese of Arizona officially and who is not canonically resident there can bring such a notoriety on it. During my time as Dean he tried several times to take shots at me and I had to put him in his place in no uncertain terms.

The job you have is an important one for the Church. I know you will stand firmly for sensible moderation when all about you the extremists and reactionaries are on the prod.

As ever,
GRS⁴⁶

Trinity's previous Dean, George R. Selway was certainly supportive of Dean Usher, as was the next writer, Columba Krebs of Prescott, Arizona.

Dear Very Rev. Dean Usher,

I read about you defending Bishop Pike in the newspaper, and am writing to let you know that I admire such courage. Truth, like a flower unfolding itself, petal by petal, comes in time, as minds become attune to accept it. Even to his disciples, Jesus said there were many things he could tell them, but they were not ready for it yet. The deeper meaning of Religion unfolds for sincere truth seekers, that makes it so much more meaningful!

Respectfully yours,
Columba Krebs⁴⁷

The last letter from Pastor Lindamood once again is a show of support for Usher's stance.

Dear Mr. Usher:

I am not certain that I have even officially met you but regardless of that I wanted to express my appreciation to you for having the courage to speak out against your 14 fellow clergymen who are trying to try Bishop Pike. Chances are that by now you may have gotten all kinds of negative letters and enunciations from Birchers and various other "questionable characters" that seem to populate

⁴⁶ The Right Reverend George R. Selway, D. D. to the Right Reverend Elmer B. Usher, 2 September 1965, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries, MSS-138, box 5, folder 3.

⁴⁷ Columba Krebs to the Right Reverend Elmer B. Usher, 30 September 1965, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries, MSS-138, box 5, folder 3.

Phoenix. I do not always agree with the good Bishop Pike concerning the historic episcopate and some other issues but I find him very refreshing and a shot in the arm to the church. Thanks for having the courage to speak out in support of him. We need more of such courage in Phoenix. God be with you.

Cordially yours,
Sam J. Lindamood, Jr., Pastor⁴⁸

These sentiments were consistent with several other letters that were written by community members and clergy from across the country on behalf the Dean and his support of Bishop Pike, with a higher concentration of letters from California and Michigan. However, where there was an outpouring of support, there was also a significant amount of criticism of the Dean's position. Many of these letters were from laypeople throughout Arizona and within the Trinity membership. The following four letters are examples of the protest that Dean Usher and Bishop of Arizona, Joseph Harte, received. First is a letter from Jack Williams, the soon-to-be governor of Arizona and Trinity member.

Dear Dean:

Many times in history the right of dissent and incredulity has operated as a yeast to improve society. As long as it is played as an obbligate to strong sturdy measures, it can lend brilliance and beauty. But, it is my concern today that no longer is there a refuge of faith in modern society. This faith can only come from respected and dedicated religious leaders. When a Pike [or] anyone of his position encourages doubt today, he feeds the insecurities and uncertainties of not only the young, but of crackpots and "extremists" who normally would be held back in conformity by the solidity of society itself.

When tests can pose a question—which would you rather do spit on the flag or the cross!—we have a strange unbalance. Youth has always questioned, but it did so against a framework of faith. Today, the questioning youth has his gravest doubts supported and his faith ridiculed. There must be caveats and taboos. The cross must be sacrosanct; else the next question can well be, would you rather commit incest with your mother or your father?

⁴⁸ Sam J. Lindamood, Jr., Pastor to the Right Reverend Elmer B. Usher, 8 September 1965, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries, MSS-138, box 5, folder 3.

Incidentally, I don't know how strongly you feel in the matter of Pike. You may have been mouse-trapped. Ed Murray is Urbano's mentor. Murray is a self-proclaimed "Christian Existentialist", brilliant and erratic. He would like nothing better than to precipitate a good rousing religious battle—for circulations sake. Wish you'd walked into Mason's office (he's ME of the Gazette) and an Episcopalian.

Respectfully,
Jack Williams⁴⁹

The following letter was not addressed to Dean Usher, but rather to the Editor of *The Arizona Republic*. The letter, from Earle A. Bronson, Jr. D.D.S., seems never to have reached print, but it was carbon copied to "Joseph Harte, Bishop of Arizona, The Wonderful 14, John Yellot, Warden, Vestry, All Saints'."

⁴⁹ Jack Williams to Dean Elmer B. Usher, 26 August 1965, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries, MSS-138, box 5, folder 3.

Dean Usher and Bishop Pike

In his rush to defend Bishop James A. Pike, Dean Usher shows us that typical tactic of debate which is so prevalent today—namely, skirt the issues, twist the issues, and attack your opponent by innuendoes and inferences.

For example, the Dean Usher quote, “absolute conformity to creedal statements does not necessarily make Christians.” How true! And I know the petitioning clergy agree. BUT, the inference is just the opposite.

Dean Usher says that Pike is being attacked for those virtues which are Christian. Nowhere, I repeat, nowhere do the petitioning clergy attack any of his virtues. They do, in particular, charge Bishop Pike with the following denials of basic tenets of Christianity which have held for over 1900 years.

These denials are: the denial of our Lord’s virgin birth; the denial of the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity and of the Incarnations as the church has received the same; the denial of the empty tomb and the bodily Resurrection and Ascension.

Does your “inclusiveness of the Anglican position” include these denials, Dean Usher?

Are we Unitarians or are we Christians? The Unitarians do not claim to be Christians. The Unitarians as a denomination are quite small, but they have indeed succeeded remarkably in influencing, not the laity, but certainly many of the clergy of other denominations, especially some who make the most noise, such as: Harry Emerson Fosdick, James A. Pike, and Martin Luther King, Jr., all exponents of the Unitarian disbelief in the divinity of Christ.

You are distressed with the petition of the clergymen and the manner in which you express this distress has disgusted me.

The deprecating manner in which you use the words orthodoxy and orthodox is, for any with eyes to see, an underhanded slap at our beloved Father Paul Urbano and his column “Orthodox.”

Your statement, Dean Usher, saying that the 14 Arizona clergy are willing and able only to give old answers to old questions that the people are not even asking is a real gem. May I cordially invite you to attend the services at All Saints’ Church to hear these old answers to old questions which ARE asked and which do bring people to Christ and Christ-like ethical judgements of the things of this world.

Sincerely,
Earle A. Bronson, Jr. D. D. S.⁵⁰

The next letter was addressed to the Bishop of Arizona, Joseph M. Harte, rather than Dean Usher, but was likely to have been copied to the Dean.

⁵⁰ Earle A. Bronson, Jr., D. D. S. to the editor of the *Arizona Republic*, 22 August 1965, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries, MSS-138, box 5, folder 3.

Dear Bishop Harte:

On August seventeenth, fourteen highly respected Episcopal clergymen called for the dismissal of the Rt. Rev. James A. Pike, Bishop of California, according to an article in the Republic and Gazette. Knowing the strength of the force emanating from the National Council of Churches and other arms of the Liberal Establishment which will be brought to bear against these brave men in support of Bishop Pike, I beseech you to stand at their side in defense of Christianity and the tenets of the Episcopal faith.

I have compiled a file containing the record of Bishop Pike's blasphemous and heretical utterances since he has been a bishop of our church and the revolutionary political positions which he has taken. I am sure that you are aware of all of them and therefore will not present you with a summary of more than a few. I do not dispute his right to express his views on any subject, but do contend that he should not be allowed to use the pulpit to give voice to these utterances or masquerade as an Episcopal bishop. To allow him to do so is to destroy the rubrics of the Episcopal faith and make a mockery of its precepts. Had Bishop Pike entered the Episcopal priesthood for the express purpose of destroying it, he could not have accomplished more and upon reviewing his strange record of ascendancy to his prominent position, many Christians have questioned his motives.

Just recently, a loved granddaughter, Karen Van Bronkhorst, was baptized and confirmed in Chico, California, by Father Porter whom I believe you know. As a life-long Episcopalian, this act of Karen's should have filled me with joy and confidence in her future. However, as Karen is leaving for Syracuse University in a few days, what assurance do I have that she may not come under the influence of an "Episcopal" priest as radical as Bishop Pike? I can only pray that her dedication to Christianity and her high moral and ethical standards will strengthen her resistance to such an influence; but I cannot discount the possibility that a church which tolerates a Bishop Pike, may not harbor others of his caliber.

The dismissal of Bishop Pike would be a blow struck for the preservation of Christianity and the country which was founded under its precepts. I beg you to give the clergymen you have had the courage to take this step your strong support.

Sincerely,
Mrs. J. Shelby Daniel⁵¹

The following letter was written on *Tucson Daily Citizen* letterhead.

Dear Rev. Usher:

I am writing about the quote attributed to you in the attached clipping which was printed in the Citizen on Aug. 21.

⁵¹ Mrs. J. Shelby Daniel to the Right Reverend Joseph M. Harte, 2 September 1965, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries, MSS-138, box 5, folder 3.

This note will not do any good since our views are 180 degrees apart. But my response to the paragraph on “The Great task....” seems to want to blow off in written words.

My feeling is that you people—who are I assume now in control—are taking a direction that may very well finish the Church off for good.

I should say that theologically I am a liberal and not interested in the issue involving Bishop Pike here. I do think it was a little unkind of you to call people suffering in the confusion of contemporary times “medieval minds.”

I believe that the great task of the Church today is to define the Christian view in words that are contemporary and therefore hopefully meaningful to modern man...

To me, the end result of your sentence on “Christlike judgements....” is an expression of political concern...

Generally, the group of clergy now in control seems to identify with the “liberal view”—and even the Democratic Party.

For many, God has become government.

But Agape is a far deeper concept than any particular political solution to a problem—whether race, housing, sex etc.

You people are tending to identify (in the congregation’s mind) agape with the liberal point of view. This can mean defining a forced governmental solution as an expression of the power of love.

Force is contrary to the nature of that flow of energy we call love.

It may be that a wiser expression of agape to a suffering human could be “I’m sorry. But you are going to have to work this out for yourself.” than “The government shall save you.” or in the case of a rich father, “Daddy will save you.”...

It is interesting that Jesus is offering his vision of Agape and Humility makes no political prescription for his times...

The times call for fresh thought at that submerged level of the individual far below the sociological pattern which changes as fashion.

This collection of comments does NOT call for a response.

Our views are so separated that dialogue is not possible.

Cordially yours,
John Riddick, (a reporter)⁵²

⁵² John Riddick to Reverend Elmer B. Usher, 25 August 1965, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries, MSS-138, box 5, folder 3.

Nearly fifty additional letters, telegrams, and documents, both for and against the Dean, are catalogued in the holdings of the Trinity Cathedral Records.

Once again, it is worth noting that the entirety of the heresy accusations and fallout occurred in tandem with the production of Duke Ellington's *First Sacred Concert* at Grace Cathedral (the Cathedral of the Diocese of California and the seat of Bishop James Pike) on September 16, 1965. Though there were never any direct links made between the events leading up to Ellington's appearance at Grace Cathedral and the commotion being made at Trinity, it is likely that the charges and outcomes would be a part of everyday conversation among the clergy in San Francisco.

Race and Civil Rights in 1960s Phoenix

Duke Ellington's concerts at Trinity Cathedral were groundbreaking in several ways, not the least of which were presentation of sounds of jazz in a sacred space and the appearance of a black bandleader and his band in a recently integrated city with a storied past of segregation and violence. Phoenix's history of race and its march to desegregation, although not nearly as violent as the movement in the South, had its share of uprisings and heroes that made civil rights an important part of the story of Duke Ellington's arrival in Phoenix, Arizona.

In many ways, segregation and race relations in Phoenix mirrored segregation and race relations in South. For most of the city's history, Phoenix's small black population, not constituting not more than 5% of the population in the mid-60s, lived in a defined area of south Phoenix. Most of Phoenix's minority population lived in neighborhoods bordered by Harrison Street to the north and South Mountain to the south and reached from approximately 20th Street to 20th Avenue to the east and west, respectively. The 1963-64 edition of the *Negro Motorist Green Book*, a publication that

gave “the Negro traveler information that will keep him from running into difficulties, embarrassments and to make his trips more enjoyable,” only lists two restaurants and four hotels in which black families would be welcome in Phoenix.⁵³ The segregation and lack of access to resources experienced by black Phoenicians led to a civil rights movement in the city that, while small, accomplished a great deal.

As the Civil Rights Movement gained momentum in the U.S. in the 1950s and ‘60s, Phoenix’s small but active minority population became a force in the city and was rallied by Lincoln and Eleanor Ragsdale. Dr. Matthew C. Whitaker, in his book entitled *Race Work: The Rise of Civil Rights in the Southwest* writes, “Throughout the peak years of the civil rights movement, Blacks such as Lincoln and Eleanor Ragsdale led the way in fighting racial discrimination and the oppression of minorities in Phoenix.”⁵⁴ The Ragsdales were leaders in every sense: the couple owned several successful businesses around Phoenix; Lincoln, at one point, was involved in every minority-focused activist organization in Phoenix; and they were essential to the local civil rights movement. Because of their prominence in Phoenix’s black community, they took part in many of the local, historic events that took place throughout the Civil Rights Era. The Ragsdales were essential to the civil rights movement in Phoenix as early as 1951, when Lincoln Ragsdale became embedded in several local minority-focused organizations. The couple’s importance continued through the 1960s and ‘70s after the Civil Rights Act was passed and as Phoenix continued to struggle with equal access to housing and education.⁵⁵ A select number of these events included Martin Luther King Jr.’s speeches

⁵³ Victor H. Green, *The Negro Motorist Green Book, 1963-64*, New York: Victor H. Green & Company, 1963, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/the-green-book?&keywords=&sort=sortString+asc#/?tab=about>.

⁵⁴ Matthew C. Whitaker, *Race Work: The Rise of Civil Rights in the Urban West*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 199.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 211.

at Arizona State University and Tanner Chapel in June of 1964; the election of Arizona's first black Senator, Clovis Campbell in 1962,⁵⁶ the passing of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act in 1965; and a statewide Civil Rights Bill in 1965 that banned discrimination in housing, employment, voting, and public accommodations.⁵⁷

It is not surprising that segregation affected and informed Phoenix's music scene. Jazz and blues clubs did indeed exist in mid-century Phoenix, though unlike many east-coast clubs, racial integration in the Phoenix clubs was relatively nonexistent. Phoenix's black community yearned for musical outlets, and the Ragsdales—along with other Phoenicians—created popular venues like their own nightclub, The Century Skyroom, which would play host to local and regional music acts. In an interview, Whitaker provided insight into the blues and jazz clubs of Phoenix saying, “these venues were certainly not mainstream and you didn't have a bevy of moneyed, middleclass whites descending upon these environments...it was more insular.”⁵⁸ South Phoenix restaurants like Bob's Rose Room (on Jackson Street, near 17th Street in Phoenix)⁵⁹ and venues like the “Colored” Elks Lodge (# 477, 1007 South 7th Ave, Phoenix, AZ)⁶⁰ would play essential roles in educating and molding local blues and jazz musicians like Charles Lewis.⁶¹

Charles Lewis, one of Arizona's best-known and beloved blues and jazz musicians, remembers the climate of race and race relations in Phoenix when he moved to the city from Philadelphia to attend Arizona State College in 1953. Growing up in Philadelphia, Lewis remembers his seemingly unlimited access to black jazz musicians.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 149.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 176, 185.

⁵⁸ Matthew C. Whitaker interview conducted by Ryan Downey on January 18, 2017.

⁵⁹ Ilan Brat, “Jazz Rift,” *Phoenix New Times*, September 11, 2003, accessed March 18, 2017, <http://www.phoenixnewtimes.com/news/jazz-rift-6407556>.

⁶⁰ “Colored Elks Plan Building,” *Arizona Republic*, November 18, 1945, 16.

⁶¹ Whitaker interview January 18, 2017.

I was very fortunate, growing up in Philadelphia. I'm talking elementary, junior high, and to a certain extent, high school. Back then, the well-known black entertainers were not working the white clubs, so they would play the black theaters, and so for 29 cents, on a Saturday, I would go in and I would see the main feature and I would see the serial. Back then, I got to hear musicians like Count Basie, "Illinois" Jacquet, Billy Eckstine, Sarah Vaughan, Cootie Williams...so you had a chance. If there was no segregation in the clubs, I would have never had the opportunity to hear these people live. It was just a wonderful experience and it gave me a real one-on-one experience with the people who were, at that time, really making history.⁶²

Once Charles Lewis moved to Phoenix, his access to these musicians was limited, though not totally nonexistent. A few famous jazz musicians would make it all the way out to Phoenix, more than likely on their way to Los Angeles and San Francisco. From his arrival in 1953 to the early '60s, Lewis remembers seeing the Modern Jazz Quartet, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Paul Chambers, Wynton Kelly, and Duke Ellington. Phoenix's segregation made it difficult, however, for these musicians to spend much time in the city. Lewis recounted one particular story that sums up what a black jazz musician would have faced in Phoenix.

I distinctly remember, Buddy Montgomery and a couple of the other players wanted to stay in a motel, and we were at 7th Street and Van Buren, which is Phoenix Union High School Auditorium. So I said, "follow me!" and I stopped at a couple motels, but, you know, they said, "Sorry, we can't," so they [Buddy Montgomery and the other musicians] said, "Well, screw it! We'll just drive on and forget about staying the night." And they just drove straight through to L.A. Here again, it was just part of the consciousness in certain areas at the time. In spite of the frustration, there was a lot of upbeat relationship to the circumstances which they accepted. That was just part of that time."⁶³

All of these stories were "part of that time"—the mid-1960s in Phoenix and at Trinity Cathedral. Trinity Cathedral had gained national notoriety for its dissemination of *The Letter* and Dean Usher's response to the fourteen Arizona clergy's accusation of heresy, all while the city of Phoenix was finding its way through the height of civil rights and the eventual desegregation of the city. This was the world in which a black man, one of the greatest American jazz composers and musicians, would visit Phoenix, Arizona.

⁶² Charles Lewis interview conducted by Ryan Downey on October 24, 2016.

⁶³ Charles Lewis interview October 24, 2016.

Preparations for Duke's Arrival

Canon Harold Weicker first linked Duke Ellington and Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, the venue of the *First Sacred Concert's* premiere, to Trinity Cathedral in Phoenix. Canon Harold Weicker graduated from Church Divinity School of the Pacific (CDSPP) in Berkeley, California, one of the ten Episcopal seminaries in the United States in 1963. After graduation, Canon Weicker heard of an opening at Trinity Cathedral. Being fairly liberal, Weicker did not think of Phoenix, Arizona, as a natural, spiritual home. However, Canon Weicker had heard of the recent appointment of a "very interesting Dean" Elmer Usher, and thought that there might be an opportunity to make change in a state that months earlier had tried to bring heresy charges against Bishop James Pike for his liberal beliefs. Harold met with the man whom he fondly called "Tip" Usher and was hired as Canon to Trinity Cathedral in 1965.

Almost as soon as Canon Weicker arrived at Trinity Cathedral, he began to champion programs that would ultimately pave the way for Duke Ellington's *Sacred Concert* performances at the Cathedral. During his first months, and holding true to his original intent of bringing more socially liberal views to central Phoenix, Canon Weicker became one of about fifty Arizona clergy to sign a "Pledge of Social Justice." The story made the front page of the Saturday, June 11, 1966, *Arizona Republic* which states, "More than 50 Arizona clergy of all faiths have issued a pledge to work toward the furtherance of 'brotherhood and freedom of all people.'"⁶⁴ The *Republic* also reports that the signing of the pledge was motivated by the recent murder of James Meredith, a significant figure of the Civil Rights Movement, and by pending civil rights legislation in Phoenix. Some signatories of interest include Joseph M. Harte, Bishop of Arizona; Dean

⁶⁴ "Clergy Sign Pledge on Social Justice," *Arizona Republic*, June 11, 1966, 18.

Elmer B. Usher and Canon Ray Dugan of Trinity Cathedral; and several other prominent leaders of the Roman Catholic and Jewish communities around the state.

Canon Weicker helped plan a series of workshops, the first of which was entitled “War and Peace” held on October 22, 1966. This particular workshop, geared toward young Phoenicians and their relationship to the Vietnam War draft, featured Senator Barry Goldwater, parishioner and member of Trinity Cathedral, who spoke on the side of war, and pacifist Robert Vogel, who was Peace Education Secretary of the American Friends Service. It has to be said, however, that Senator Goldwater expressed his concerns to Canon Weicker about this seeming association with any kind of pro-war stance. During an interview, Canon Weicker recounts asking Goldwater to play the “pro-war” role during the “War and Peace” workshop, to which the senator reportedly responded “Well, I don’t think that’s me.” An *Arizona Republic* article from October 30th, 1966, recounts a lively debate between Goldwater and Vogel and the overall success of the workshop, which drew a crowd of over 250 young people.⁶⁵ Just one month later, Duke Ellington would play a special role in one of Weicker’s workshops geared toward the young people of Phoenix—a topic that will be explored in a later chapter. The workshop was followed by a dance for the attendees featuring the local band, “The Just Cause.”⁶⁶

Though Canon Weicker was in Phoenix, it was a connection he had made while in seminary at CDSP that was Trinity Cathedral’s ultimate link to Grace Cathedral and the First *Sacred Concert*. Canon Weicker’s friend from CDSP, Canon John S. Yaryan, was one of the producers of the sacred concert at Grace Cathedral in 1965. Yaryan befriended Duke Ellington during the production process, and he and the great American composer

⁶⁵ “Politician, Pacifist Argue War, Peace,” *Arizona Republic*, October 30, 1966.

⁶⁶ Paul Schatt, “What’s Happening: Trinity Cathedral Plans ‘War Workshop,’” *Arizona Republic*, October 22, 1966.

became lifelong friends. After hearing an original recording of the Grace Cathedral concert, Canon Weicker knew that if he could hire Ellington and his orchestra to perform the *Sacred Concert*, it would be a historical moment for Trinity Cathedral and, more broadly, for Phoenix.

After consulting with Dean Usher, and ultimately gaining his approval, Canon Weicker was determined to bring Ellington and his Orchestra back to Phoenix for only the third time in Ellington's career. He called his friend, John Yaryan, and asked for the best way to contact Duke Ellington to inquire if he would be interested in coming down to Trinity, after which Yaryan gave Weicker Ellington's hotel phone number. Weicker remembers thinking about everything that might go wrong during this call. In an interview, Weicker recounted that Ellington,

was playing a gig down there (Los Angeles) and I didn't know if he was even at the hotel. I remember calling and asking to speak to Duke Ellington, figuring that he probably blocked all calls, or was gone. The switchboard operator, very nicely, said, 'one moment please,' and the next thing I knew, I was talking to Duke. I told him I was good friends with the Yaryans and asked if he would be willing to come down to Phoenix to do the same concert at the Cathedral, and he said 'Yes, I would.'⁶⁷

A calendar-style itinerary from 1966, found in the holdings of the Duke Ellington Collection in the National Museum of American History's (NMAH) Archive Collection adds slightly more detail to Weicker's recollection of his call to Duke Ellington, and to his ultimate arrival in Phoenix. The "Duke Ellington Itinerary" is a calendar view of all of Duke's booked events from May through December, 1966. Most of the entries were typed, though a few, including an entry for "Trinity," were hand written—and Ellington's appearance in Tucson in the days leading up to the *Sacred Concert* in Phoenix had not yet been scheduled. A slight discrepancy between Ellington's booked events from November 10th to 13th, 1966, and Weicker's recollections the same weekend arises from

⁶⁷ Harold Weicker interview conducted by Ryan Downey on November 14, 2016.

this calendar. During his interview, Weicker did not recall and additional events in Phoenix, though Ellington’s calendar has two typed entries for November 11th and 12th in Phoenix—seemingly having been planned at the time the calendar was created.⁶⁸ Though it is difficult to determine an exact timeline for the booking at Trinity Cathedral, it was most like during the summer of 1966 when Ellington agreed to head down to Phoenix and the date of November 10, 1966, was set for a performance of his *First Sacred Concert* accompanied by Trinity Cathedral’s choir.

Preparations for the concert began, but there were some concerns to address before Ellington’s arrival. Of utmost importance was the cost of the concerts. Much of the documentation and correspondence contained within the “Duke Ellington” file of the Trinity Cathedral Records deals with the cost of seats and communicating the “value” of the concerts to the Cathedral and community. The first documented correspondence in the Records is a letter from The Very Reverend C. Julian Bartlett, Dean of Grace Cathedral, addressing some details that Weicker had seemingly inquired about in an earlier letter. Dean Bartlett’s letter addressed several of the same issues that would ultimately come to play in the Trinity Cathedral production. Though there is no archival evidence of a contract or booking with Duke Ellington for the *Sacred Concert* at Trinity⁶⁹, it seems, based on the band’s Orchestra Itinerary and other supplementary documents, that Ellington and his Orchestra would cost between \$3,500 and 4,500—an equivalent of nearly \$30,000 in 2017 dollars.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Duke Ellington Itinerary, Duke Ellington Collection, 1903-1988, Archives Center National Museum of American History.

⁶⁹ Neither the Ellington Collection nor the Trinity Cathedral Records hold any evidence of a contract.

⁷⁰ Itinerary of Duke Ellington Orchestra 1966, Duke Ellington Collection, 1903-1988, Archives Center National Museum of American History; Trinity Cathedral Expenses 1966 and 1967 Proposed Budget, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries, MSS-138, box 5, folder 3; “CPI Inflation Calculator,” Bureau of Labor Statistics, accessed March 17, 2017, https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm.

The letter from Dean Bartlett addresses a few additional areas of concern that Grace Cathedral had dealt with during their production of Ellington's *Sacred Concert*. First was the importance of "setting the tone" of the event. Bartlett writes, "...for you no doubt will be criticized for having 'jazz' in the Cathedral!" The letter continues with a sentiment from Dean Bartlett that is later echoed in the Trinity concert program by Dean Usher and Duke Ellington himself. Bartlett writes, "Of course, Ellington's music is not jazz—it is Ellington's music, the like of which no one else plays! That is not to say that it would be wrong to play jazz in the Cathedral, if indeed the jazz were offered as seriously and conveying the same feeling as the music of this concert does."⁷¹ Bartlett's advice was taken to heart. During the weeks leading up to Ellington's appearance at Trinity, Dean Elmer Usher writes several times to the congregation explaining the inherent value of Ellington's music being played at Trinity Cathedral.

Dean Bartlett's letter also highlights the different ways in which Grace Cathedral promoted and sold tickets and the general production details of the concert itself. Because of the sheer number of seats available for the Grace Cathedral concert—1,500—the Cathedral relied on a commercial box office in downtown San Francisco to handle ticket sales. As for the production of the concert, the Dean writes, "We did not have any form of worship with the concert. We wanted the concert to stand alone in its own integrity as a 'service of worship.' I think to offer liturgical worship at the same time would be undesirable."⁷²

A handful of the documents in the Duke Ellington file of the Trinity Records are undated, but do, however, indicate some semblance of a timeline. The document entitled

⁷¹ The Very Reverend C. Julian Bartlett to Reverend Harold H. Weicker – Canon Missioner, 29 August 1966, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries, MSS-138, box 6, folder 7.

⁷² Ibid.

“Ellington Concert: Income Study” gives us a look at initial targets for income generated by a Duke Ellington concert.

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Ellington Concert:  Income Study

"Patrons" Subscription: first 10 pews (160 seats)
$175 per pew (eight seats)
$25 per seat

If bought by pews - $3500
If bought by seats- $4000

"Subscriber" tickets: Second ten pews (160 seats)
$15 per seat - $2400 or $120 per pew - $2400
$10 per seat (gallery, 80 seats) - $800

General Admission: Last 9 pews (144 seats)
$5 per seat - $720

A total of 544 seats - $7670 *

If 19 rows of two side chairs are included (20 aisle chairs at $15 each;
18 at $5 each) add $390

If 200 seats are included in Bishop Atwood Hall at 50¢ each - add $100

Maximum total - $8160*

*If "Patron" subscriptions are averaged at $3750
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Figure 2. "Income Study." Used with permission from Trinity Cathedral, Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries.

According to the “Income Study,” Trinity Cathedral was planning to generate upwards of \$8,160.00 if one concert were to sell out. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ website, the buying power of \$8,160.00 in 1966 would be around \$61,000 in March 2017. Seating plans, too, are addressed in this document. Trinity was willing to sell 544 tickets. At the present time, however, Trinity Cathedral comfortably seats around 375 people. The Income Study also indicates seating in Bishop Atwood Hall—a multipurpose space at the opposite end of Trinity’s footprint. Although it does not seem to have ever occurred, seating in Bishop Atwood Hall would have required some amount of television

equipment as Atwood Hall has never been connected to the Cathedral in any direct manner.

In early October, 1966, Trinity Cathedral began selling tickets for the two November 10th, 1966, performances of Duke Ellington's "*Sacred Concert*." Trinity Cathedral settled on presenting two concerts with varying ticket prices. According to the final "Ticket Subscription Form," which was included in a letter from Canon Weicker that went out to Episcopal parishes throughout the state, there was to be a 6:00 PM High School Concert with General Admission seating at \$1.75 per ticket and a VIP-type concert at 8:30 pm with tickets that ranged in price from \$10.00 – \$25.00. Along with the brief listing of ticket prices, the letter ensures that the price of the High School Concert tickets be "less than the price of most movies!" The letter only briefly mentions the music that is to be performed. Canon Weicker writes, "I won't take up your time promoting the concert, *The Record* did a good job of that. The music, performed by Ellington and his orchestra of fifteen men, four soloists, and our choir is excellent and deeply moving."⁷³ Other than this mention, the rest of the letter speaks only to the process of buying tickets. The article in the *Arizona Church Record* to which Weicker refers communicates the times and ticket prices of the concerts and mentions that Ellington's musical concept for the work is "inspired by the first four words of the Bible."⁷⁴

⁷³ Harold H. Weicker to "Dear Brother," 7 October 1966, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries, MSS-138, box 6, folder 7.

⁷⁴ "Cathedral Festival with 'Duke' Ellington," *Arizona Church Record*, October – November 1966, no. 3, 4.

TICKET SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Trinity Cathedral
114 West Roosevelt
Phoenix, Arizona

Dear Canon Weicker:

Please send me the following tickets:

8:30 Concert

Patrons' Donations: _____ @ \$25.00 ea. = \$ _____

General Subscription: _____ @ \$10.00 ea. = \$ _____

Special Rate Tickets: _____ @ \$ 2.50 ea. = \$ _____
(one for every 7 purchased above)

6:00 High School Concert

General Admission: _____ @ \$1.75 ea. = \$ _____

Our check is enclosed for the following TOTAL amount: \$ _____

Name: The Rev. _____
Church: _____
Address: _____

Please do not write in this space:

Order received: _____

Tickets mailed: _____

Figure 3. "Ticket Subscription Form." Used with permission from Trinity Cathedral, Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries.

In addition to ticket prices and the brief statement regarding music, this document provides insight into two other points. First, the tickets were released to members of the Episcopal Diocese before they were released for public sale. Additionally, Weicker's ticket letter says,

For our clergy alone, (and we ask that you please treat this confidentially,) for every seven seats that your people buy for the 8:30 concert, we can let you have the eighth seat for \$2.50. This arrangement, as I say, be between us, and you could use these special tickets as you wish. The 6:00 concert is, in essence, being subsidized by the later concert, so there is nothing about special tickets we can do there.

In the end, it is difficult to determine how many tickets were sold for the two concerts, but a document entitled "Trinity Cathedral Expenses and 1967 Proposed Budget" reveals that Cathedral would make about \$5,500 through

ticket sales. However, after considering expenses, the Cathedral would only net \$650.

As previously alluded to, the price of tickets was one of the documented concerns of the congregation that runs throughout these months leading up to the Duke Ellington concerts. A couple of weeks after the ticket order-forms had been sent out, Dean Elmer Usher addresses the issue of ticket prices in a letter to the Trinity Cathedral congregation that reads, “Dear Friends, There has been some disappointment over the cost of the Ellington Concert tickets coupled with a real desire to attend the performance. We have therefore decided to make the following changes which, we hope will so meet with your approval that you will attend this event.”⁷⁵ There is no indication in other documents that tickets were not selling well, but the letter goes on to explain that there will be a \$5.00 adult ticket available for the 6:00 PM High School concert, and an undisclosed number of \$6.00 general admission tickets, in addition to the \$10 and \$25 tickets, to the 8:30 PM concert—a change that led to lower-than-projected ticket income.

The Dean continues to write,

We are doing this with a certain amount of reticence. Whereas, we certainly hope that the new lower admissions will encourage those of you who have not purchased tickets to sign up immediately, we also hope that many of you, realizing how very import this benefit is, will become patrons or subscribers...We have made these reductions so that more people can and will attend this extraordinary concert—but, because of this, our need for patrons is more acute. We hope that you will come, and if your means permit, please consider the \$25.00 patron donation and \$10.00 subscription. At the same time, if you were holding back because of the cost, we sincerely hope that the lower admission will assure your attendance.

This will be the biggest concert Mr. Ellington will do during his brief stay in Phoenix. Along with his full orchestra, he will have four distinguished vocalists, a notable dancer, his talented choir director and our complete choir. Thursday evening, November 10th, will be a night to remember.

⁷⁵ Dean Elmer B. Usher to “Dear Friends,” 24 October 1966, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries, MSS-138, box 6, folder 7.

As a side note, the Dean’s “P.S.” also alludes to the fact that tickets could be purchased at all community box offices, a change from Canon Weicker’s original plan of only having the tickets available at the Cathedral.

At this point it makes sense to examine the Patrons list—those who answered the Dean’s letter and call to support the once-in-a-lifetime concert. Figure 4 is the “Patrons” list from the 1966 Duke Ellington *Sacred Concert* at Trinity Cathedral. Many of the Patrons on this list were prominent Phoenix families and businesses and several are worth highlighting (refer to APPENDIX A for short biographical information about select patrons from the “Patrons” list).

PATRONS

ARIZONA FLOWER SHOP
JOHN ARMER AIR-CONDITIONING Co.
MR. AND MRS. LEONARD W. BECK, SR.
MR. AND MRS. NELSON BROWN
DR. AND MRS. ZEPH B. CAMPBELL
MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM W. CLORE
MR. PAUL HYDE DAVIES
MRS. A. F. DENISON
CANON AND MRS. RAYMOND DUGAN
MR. AND MRS. HENRY GALBRAITH
GLASSART STUDIO
SENATOR AND MRS. BARRY GOLDWATER
DR. CURTIS O. GREENFIELD
THE RT. REV. AND MRS. JOSEPH M. HARTE
ELIZABETH K. JEFFREY
JENNINGS & THOMPSON ADVERTISING Co.
MR. AND MRS. RICHARD G. KLEINDIENST
MR. AND MRS. FRED H. KNOWLES
LEDERMAN MUSIC Co.
MRS. CHARMIAN LEUBA
MRS. GEORGE LUTGERDING
MR. AND MRS. LOUIS MELCZER
MRS. CHARLES E. MERCER
DR. AND MRS. M. W. MERRILL
MR. AND MRS. JOSEPH MILLER
PHOENIX COCA-COLA BOTTLING Co.
MR. AND MRS. JOHN PRITZLAFF
REED MULLAN FORD Co.
MR. AND MRS. PAUL M. ROCA
ROSENZWEIG'S JEWELERS
CANON AND MRS. JAMES TITCOMB
MR. AND MRS. HAROLD R. UDKOFF
THE VERY REV. AND MRS. ELMER B. USHER
UNIVERSAL MEMORIAL CENTER
MRS. C. W. WADDOUPS
CANON AND MRS. HAROLD H. WEICKER
GOV.-ELECT AND MRS. JACK WILLIAMS
DR. AND MRS. MACDONALD WOOD

Figure 4. "Patrons" list from Trinity's "A Concert of Sacred Music by Ellington" Concert Program. Used with permission from Trinity Cathedral, Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries.

It is important to note that not all of the patrons on the list were members of Trinity Cathedral. However, the majority were members of the Cathedral and Phoenix's elite.

The last two pieces of documented communication contained within the "Duke Ellington File" do not give much additional insight into the events leading up to Ellington's appearance on the night of November 10th, 1966. First is a solicitation letter from Canon Weicker to a Mr. Donald Poarch, the manager of a department store named Diamond's in what was then Thomas Mall, explaining expenses involved in producing the concert and the reason for putting on the production. Weicker writes, "We felt that this concert was important to Phoenix for two reasons: because it is beautiful music and because Mr. Ellington and what he stands for is a great witness to any person who sees and hears him."⁷⁶ Unfortunately, the call for patronage must have been unsuccessful as Diamond's does not appear on the final "Patrons" list. The second is a letter addressed to Terrie Specht, President of the Episcopal Youth Community in Tombstone, Arizona, once again reiterating the price of tickets. However, a little more detail is gleaned from this letter as it mentions another event that was to take place while Duke Ellington was to be in Phoenix. The letter mentions the Duke Ellington Workshop for youth that was planned for the afternoon of November 12, 1966, from 1:30 – 4:00 PM, also at Trinity Cathedral.⁷⁷

In the end, planning and preparations for the *Sacred Concert* at Trinity Cathedral lasted for several months. The importance of the occasion would bring together some of Phoenix's best-known politicians, families, businessmen, and businesses.

⁷⁶ Harold H. Weicker Canon to Mr. Donald Poarch, 3 November 1966, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries, MSS-138, box 6, folder 7.

⁷⁷ Harold H. Weicker Canon to Mr. Donald Poarch, 3 November 1966, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries, MSS-138, box 6, folder 7.

Showtime

After its premiere at San Francisco's Grace Cathedral, Duke Ellington's *First Sacred Concert* was an immediate success and became a standard on the Ellington Orchestra's tour circuit over the next several years. In 1966, Ellington and his band played the *Sacred Concert* both the week before and after the performances at Trinity Cathedral on November 10th and had played the *Sacred Concert* a total of thirteen times by the end of 1966. During the week leading up to their trip to Phoenix, Duke Ellington and his band stayed and played three shows a night in Tucson's Spanish Trail Motel and Supper Club located on Benson Highway, which runs south of Tucson. Over the course of the week, Duke Ellington's telephone log documents ongoing communication regarding the arrival of Herman McCoy, whose "UCLA Swing Choir" was an integral part of the premiere of Ellington's *Sacred Concert*. Indeed, McCoy's interpretation of the choral parts of the *Sacred Concert* is one of the defining characteristics of the work. McCoy didn't join the Ellington and his band for every performance of the *Sacred Concert* after its premiere, but he did travel to Phoenix to help rehearse the Cathedral Choir before Ellington and his band arrived, namely to help interpret what Trinity's Choirmaster would later call a musical idiom that was "demanding and unfamiliar."⁷⁸

The Program

As Ellington toured with his *Sacred Concert*, the music played and the physical layout of the concert programs stayed relatively consistent with the premiere performance at Grace Cathedral, despite changes in venue. The programs include an introductory letter by Duke Ellington and pages listing the program and musicians;

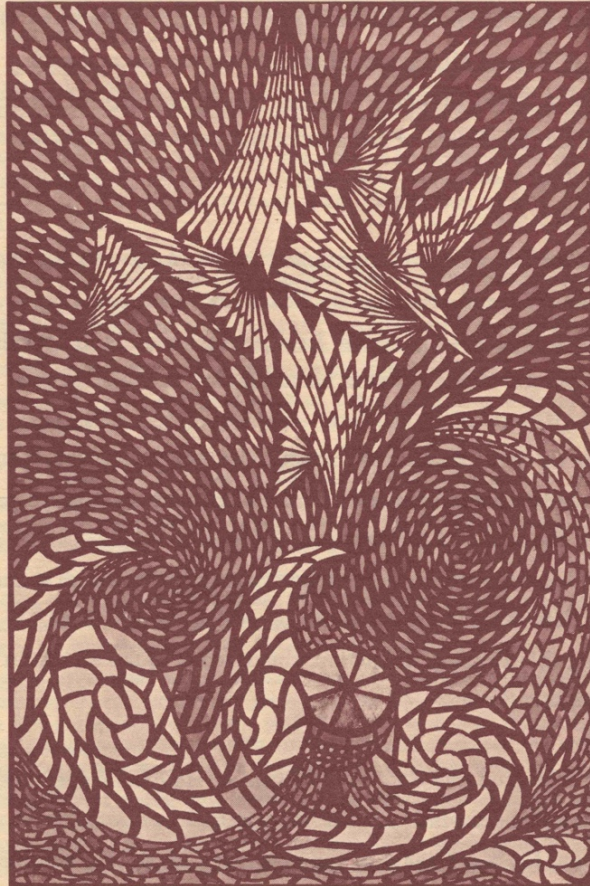
⁷⁸ Telephone log October 14, 1966 to February 28, 1967, Duke Ellington Collection, 1903-1988, Archives Center National Museum of American History.

however, the art and design of the *Sacred Concert* programs varied greatly from venue to venue. One program, produced by Temple Emanuel, Beverly Hills, was adorned with shining gold leaf and bound with braided cord and tassels; others were simplistic, featuring one color on paper, not unlike the program produced for the concert at Grace Cathedral.

There were a few differences and additions to the program that made the concert at Trinity Cathedral truly unique. The first was the cover, which featured an artist's rendering by its designer, Glidden Parker, of the soon-to-be installed Melczer Memorial Window—the first of the stained-glass windows to be installed at Trinity Cathedral. This window can be seen today in the southwest corner of the Cathedral. Like many of the other *Sacred Concert* programs, the program cover offered a space that served as a way for Trinity and the Dean to advertise a piece of the Cathedral to non-members who attended the concert.

TRINITY CATHEDRAL

presents



A CONCERT of SACRED MUSIC

by

DUKE ELLINGTON

Thursday, November 10, 1966

Phoenix, Arizona

Figure 5. Cover Page of "A Concert of Sacred Music by Duke Ellington" Concert Program. Used with permission from Trinity Cathedral, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries.

The second was Dean Usher's letter to audience members. An introductory letter from the leader of the presenting church or synagogue was a feature included in most of the *Sacred Concert* programs that changed at each venue. This epistle served both as a welcome letter and a way to comment on the night's events. Many of these letters from other venues highlight different aspects of Ellington's spirituality and the need for tolerance of jazz in a sacred space. Dean Usher's letter is no different.

The Dean, Canons, Vestry and people of Trinity Cathedral take great joy in standing in the tradition of Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, and Coventry Cathedral, England, in presenting this Concert of Sacred Music with thanksgiving to God and with gratitude to Duke Ellington and his whole company of dedicated artists. Tonight's concerts are part of the year-long Cathedral Arts Festival.

For those few who have questioned the propriety of a jazz sacred concert in a Church building, Dr. Ellington's sentiments are much more theologically sound. He feels that each is to offer his best to God and if one's best is piano playing or dancing, then offer it to Him in gratitude. Over-emphasis on the sacral is a distortion of God's will for the world. The Psalmist (Psalm 150) understood this when he wrote, "Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him upon the loud cymbals and the high sounding cymbals. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord." Following this Biblical injunction, this is what Duke Ellington does tonight.⁷⁹

Duke Ellington had God's gift of genius. He has bridged the gap between the sacred and the secular and has come forth as a whole man. He is a "giant" of contemporary music. He and his company of musicians, with the Cathedral Choir, offer their best to God for themselves and for us.⁸⁰

The Dean's letter echoes the sentiments that Ellington's *Sacred Concert* letter introduces.

It has been said once that a man, who could not play the organ or any of the instruments of the symphony, accompanied his worship by juggling. He was not the world's greatest juggler but it was the one thing that he did best. And so it was accepted by God. I believe that no matter how highly skilled a drummer or saxophonist might be, that if this is the thing he does best, and he offers it sincerely from the heart in—or as accompaniment to—his worship, he will not be unacceptable because of lack of skill or of the instrument upon which he makes his demonstration, be it pipe or tomtom.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Interestingly, the text of Psalm 150 would be used two years later by Ellington in his *Second Sacred Concert*.

⁸⁰ Dean Elmer B. Usher letter in "A Concert of Sacred Music by Duke Ellington" Concert Program, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries.

⁸¹ Duke Ellington letter in "A Concert of Sacred Music by Duke Ellington" Concert Program, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries.

Taken together, both letters set the tone for the concert: They offer a glimpse into the Dean's occasionally fiery attitude, his beliefs that there are many ways one can worship God, and Ellington's assertion that, to be an acceptable servant, one must offer only his best to God.

Though most of the *Sacred Concert* programs had a list of concert sponsors or patrons, the Patron List in the Trinity Cathedral concert program provides a look into the Trinity members and community members who supported the appearance of Ellington and his music in the Cathedral (APPENDIX A).

The music that was presented on the two Trinity Cathedral concerts mirrored the Grace Cathedral concert almost exactly. However, the Trinity Cathedral program delineates "Two Traditional Spirituals," "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," and "My Lord, What a Morning," both of which were arranged by Herman McCoy, whereas the Grace Cathedral program only denotes a "Group of Traditional Spirituals." The only other change to the music performed on the original concert comes in place of "Purvis a la Jazz Hot," a composition not by Ellington but by Grace Cathedral's organist Richard Purvis. Featuring a composition by a musician from the host church seems to be a tradition sparked by the original Grace Cathedral concert. Instead of this "Jazz Hot," Trinity's Choirmaster, William Fairfield Brown, composed an arrangement of "Go, Labor On!" which was dedicated to Duke Ellington.⁸²

Recollections

There are still a few Phoenicians who remember attending or participating in Trinity's *Sacred Concert*. The stories of four people—Bishop Kirk Smith of Arizona,

⁸² A Concert of Sacred Music by Ellington Concert Program, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries.

Richard Usher (Dean Usher's son), MaryCay Armer, and Canon Ray Dugan—create a vivid picture of what attending the concert was like and, in Canon Ray Dugan's case, what it was like to sing in the concert with Duke Ellington under the direction of Herman McCoy.

The Very Reverend Kirk Smith, the current Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona, was fifteen years old when Duke Ellington played at Trinity. Smith and his family were members of the Presbyterian church down the road from Trinity when he learned of the upcoming Duke Ellington concert from his organ teacher at the time. As a junior high and high school student in Phoenix during the 1960s, Bishop Smith remembers an era of citywide segregation where only one nonwhite student attended his high school of around 2,000 students. As such, he recalls that it was remarkable that Duke Ellington was to perform in a relatively conservative church like Trinity.

Richard Usher, Dean Elmer Usher's son, was also a young man during the time of the concert. His father was a jazz aficionado and received the RCA recording of Duke Ellington's *Concert of Sacred Music*, released early in 1966, by his Canon, Harold Weicker.⁸³ The concert fit well with his father's agenda and mission of increasing the inclusivity and diversity of Trinity Cathedral, while fostering open dialogue regarding the social and political issues of the day. Richard remembers that his father, after hearing positive reviews of the *First Sacred Concert* at Grace Cathedral and listening to the recording, "got excited about using this [Duke Ellington's *Sacred Concert*] as a way to introduce the parish to the benefit of diversity to the social fabric of their thinking, and explain that there was a great deal of benefit to diversity and in what people like Dr. Ellington could provide."⁸⁴

⁸³ *Duke Ellington's Concert of Sacred Music*, Duke Ellington and his Orchestra, RCA LPM-3582/LSP-3582, 1966, 33 1/3 rpm.

⁸⁴ Richard B. Usher interview conducted by Ryan Downey, Phoenix, Arizona, on October 31, 2016.

This integration of progressive social ideals into social thought was not only an issue in the Trinity community, but in greater Phoenix as well. Phoenix wasn't the sprawling metropolis it is today. When thinking back on what Phoenix was like 50 years ago, Bishop Smith recalls that "Phoenix didn't have the cultural advantages that it does now." The city was a lot smaller—"a cow town"—and the music and visual art scene that is now thriving in downtown Phoenix was just budding in the mid-1960s; there was a symphony and opera, but not at the scale that they are now, and no ballet. In turn, an event like Duke Ellington's *Sacred Concert* at Trinity would have certainly been one of the most prestigious concerts of the year. Another point that piqued Smith's interest was the possibility of jazz in the Cathedral. Having heard of the premiere concert in Grace Cathedral, he thought that it was revolutionary to have jazz in a sacred space and that, "for the 1960s, a big deal to have jazz music in a church setting."

Richard remembers the great amount of preparation involved in Duke Ellington's arrival, from the months of planning by the vestry and other members of the church to the highly involved set-up during the week prior, including unbolting and moving pews and assembling the band stand. One of Richard's most memorable moments was not during the concert but during Duke Ellington's rehearsal beforehand, when he was able to experience one of America's greatest musicians working with his band and Trinity's own Cathedral Choir. He recalls, "Being as young as I was, I was excited about Ellington's arrival in Phoenix and I had never participated in a concert of that magnitude. I actually got to meet Duke Ellington, his musicians, and his vocalists."⁸⁵

Arriving at Trinity for what was most likely the first of the two concerts that night, Bishop Smith sat with his mother in the pews that were original to the Cathedral

⁸⁵ Richard B. Usher interview conducted by Ryan Downey, Phoenix, Arizona, on October 31, 2016.

built in 1921. The nave and altar areas were still the original dark wood, and the stained-glass windows had not been installed. He would have seen an altar area packed with additional platforms, choir risers, and band stands.

The instruments and choir were on the high altar and the shining piano that Duke Ellington would play sat right in the middle of it all. Once the invocation was given by Dean Usher, Duke Ellington came out and began playing. Smith remembers Ellington as being congenial and having his stereotypically dapper hairstyle and radiant smile, but the sounds that came next took the young listener aback.

I was a little surprised at the music. I'm not sure what I thought it was going to be. I thought it was going to sound like liturgical music in some way, maybe a little more hip, but still church music. It didn't at all! It just sounded like a jazz band, but it was very interesting. I was very aware of the historicity, or the historic moment, of seeing a man who was still very well-known and very famous. Not only that, but here he was in Phoenix, Arizona. It was a big event and I will always remember it fondly.⁸⁶

Maybe because of his fondness for rock music and the popular sounds of the day, Richard thought, "The concert itself was magnificent. The acoustics in Trinity Cathedral are second to none. There was basically no amplification and the music filled the environment and was very, very special." The music resonated freely, since the Cathedral had tile floors, stone walls, and wooden pews—only Duke Ellington and the vocal soloists had microphones.

Many of the concert attendees were Trinity members, though community members were certainly present—both concerts were packed. Important civil rights leaders were there, including Lincoln and Eleanor Ragsdale, who were friends of Trinity Cathedral and Dean Usher, and to whom Usher reached out for support of Ellington's concert.

⁸⁶ Kirk Stevan Smith interview conducted by Ryan Downey on October 28, 2016.

Canon Ray Dugan’s personal experiences at Trinity Cathedral in preparation for these two concerts offer first-hand insight. Canon Dugan was a member of the Trinity Cathedral Choir and had the opportunity to sing for Duke Ellington under the direction of Herman McCoy. The choir had been rehearsing for the concert for some time to perfect a musical style that, to many, was new. William Fairfield Brown, Trinity’s Choirmaster, was responsible for much of the choir’s preparation. During the week leading up to the concert, Herman McCoy held two rehearsals with the choir. Dugan remembers that the Cathedral Choir “spent most of the time working on the books of the Bible. He [McCoy] said, ‘There aren’t any black faces out there, but you gotta understand that you folks are the choir for the Black Community, okay? So, when you say Genesis, Exodus, I want to hear LEE-viticus!’ Most of the time was spent on that one number and he was a lot of fun to work with. He was great.”⁸⁷

Dugan was remembering working on the first piece, and one of the only original works, on Duke Ellington’s *First Sacred Concert*, “In the Beginning God.” The piece draws its motivic material from the first four words—or six syllables—of the Bible. Beginning with a simple orchestration of only piano, drums, and bass, “In the Beginning God” swirls into creation. After the introductory section of the piece, the choir shouts the books of the Old Testament at a tempo of around 205 beats per minute, almost as if Ellington were speeding his audience through all Biblical history in two minutes. The Cathedral Choir had even less rehearsal time with the Ellington and his band. The choir only had one rehearsal with the band before they performed the *First Sacred Concert* before two near-sellout crowds.

On concert night, Trinity Cathedral looked very different than it would have on a Sunday morning. As described earlier, the choir sat towards the back of the chancel,

⁸⁷ Ray Dugan interview conducted by Ryan Downey on September 12, 2016.

behind where the stage had been built to accommodate Ellington's Orchestra. Ellington and his piano sat in front of the stage. Finally, there was another platform that was built to feature Bunny Briggs, the tap dancer who was featured in the movement, "David Danced Before the Lord with All His Might." Although there were some Trinity parishioners attending the concert, the audience appeared very different than it would have on Sunday, as it primarily comprised community members dressed in black-tie and tails.

The sounds that Bishop Smith and the other audience members heard in 1966 were new for the time. Bishop Smith explains that the 1960s "was the era of experimentation," with new types of liturgical music that were being expressed within the Episcopal Church. Some churches were employing guitars, folk music, and dance for liturgical purposes. Continuing, Smith believes that "the Episcopal Church has always been willing to try some new things, and to be a little experimental, especially in that age. There was a lot of cultural upheaval and people were looking for ways to make the church more relevant and attractive."⁸⁸

Experimentation of pop sounds in liturgical music was not confined to the Episcopal church. For the Roman Catholic Church, the 1960s marked an equally musically progressive time along with a period of hope from Catholic leaders like Pope John XXIII and President John F. Kennedy. The mid-60s were responsible for the first masses in the vernacular, "a major paradigm shift for American Catholics."⁸⁹ Folk music, popular at the time, gained footing in the liturgical worship and the musical genre became a way to update Catholicism and bring it into the 20th Century.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Kirk Stevan Smith interview conducted by Ryan Downey on October 28, 2016.

⁸⁹ Ken Canedo in discussion with 8th Day host, WLUW, Loyola University, Chicago, July 20, 2009.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Singer-songwriter and seminarian, Ray Repp, was essential to the Folk Mass tradition. A student of the psalms, Repp, realizing that the psalms were originally accompanied by a stringed instruments, tried to set the texts to the popular-music sounds of the 1960s—folk music. The lyrics of Repp’s compositions were liturgical and spoke of social justice. The tradition of the folk mass grew out of Repp’s Catholic folk music. Even Trinity Cathedral would hold its own folk mass as part of the Trinity Festival in early 1966 before Ellington’s appearance later that year.⁹¹

The acceptance of forms like jazz and folk music as liturgical music points to an equally progressive Church. Though there have been some earlier examples of the Episcopal Church taking stances against progressive social thought, the Church has historically been a leader for social justice within Christianity. Examples being that the Episcopal Church was the first to ordain a Black priest, promote women to the priesthood, the first to ordain gays (including as bishops), and the first to perform gay marriages even when state governments were disapproving.⁹² Continuing, Bishop Smith confirms that, “even in a traditionally conservative state like Arizona, the Church has always been in the front of the Civil Rights Movement. That was especially true for my predecessor, Bishop Heistand, who got in some major trouble because of his progressive stance on civil rights issues,”⁹³ in the 1980s and early 1990s

When asked what he thought the Duke Ellington concert might have meant to the Trinity community, Bishop Smith replied,

For Trinity, it was representative of the fact that they were very interested in the arts, and very interested in music and culture. And that they were willing to take

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990) 51; Bill Tammeus, “Episcopal Church Celebrates 40 Years of Women in the Priesthood,” *National Catholic Reporter*, July 28, 2014, accessed March 18, 2017, <https://www.ncronline.org/news/faith-parish/episcopal-church-celebrates-40-years-women-priesthood>; William Murchison, *Mortal Follies: Episcopalians and the Crisis of Mainline Christianity* (New York: Encounter Books, 2009) 195-205.

⁹³ Kirk Stevan Smith interview conducted by Ryan Downey on October 28, 2016.

that step. You have to remember, and it might be hard for people to remember now, but the Church itself was very segregated in that day, and just the fact that, for instance, there would be a black musician in Trinity Cathedral was probably shocking to some people. But the leadership thought it was important to put on, and that was a real step forward and a good thing for the Cathedral.⁹⁴

Canon Dugan's recollections illuminate another way in which Duke Ellington's *Sacred Concert* reverberates in Trinity Cathedral to this day. During this time, 1966 to 1967, Trinity's beautiful stained-glass windows were being designed for the Cathedral's nave. The fifteen windows were designed by Dean Usher, with the help of artist Glidden Parker, and are said to have a tie to Duke Ellington's First *Sacred Concert*.

Reception

Local reception of the concerts was overwhelmingly positive. Headlines such as, "Nothing Incongruous About This Jazz in a Cathedral," and, "Religion, Royalty Come Together at Concert," praised Ellington and his band saying, "Jazz in a cathedral, tap-dancing in a sanctuary—these sound incongruous. But two audiences found last night that they weren't."⁹⁵ Much of the press of the concerts focused on a few, standout moments of the night's events.

First, the audience was large. A Trinity newsletter on the following Sunday estimates 1,100 people attended the two concerts. Today, Trinity comfortably seats about 350-400, so the audience would have had to pack into the pews. A few of the articles mention that the first concert sold out and almost 100 seats were given away to students who couldn't afford tickets. For the second "VIP" concert, the Cathedral was full of "well-dressed, middle-aged"⁹⁶ listeners, though there were some empty seats.⁹⁷ Articles

⁹⁴ Kirk Stevan Smith interview conducted by Ryan Downey on October 28, 2016.

⁹⁵ William L. Doudna, "Nothing Incongruous About This Jazz in a Cathedral," *Arizona Republic*, November 11, 1966.

⁹⁶ Robert M. Herehold, "Ellington's Way," *The Episcopalian*, January, 1967.

⁹⁷ Robert M. Herehold, "Duke Ellington Performs In Cathedral," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, November 12, 1966.

attribute the smattering of empty seats to people leaving when they found out there was to be jazz and tap dancing in the Cathedral itself, rather than in an adjoining church building. Another group of audience members left the concert at intermission,⁹⁸ and some of the Cathedral Arts Festival's loyal listeners stayed away from the concert altogether, because they could not reconcile jazz in a sacred space.⁹⁹ That said, most of the audience reactions documented in these articles relay joy and excitement, with one audience member saying "If they would have services like this regularly, I would join this church right now!"¹⁰⁰

Second, in the days following November 10th, the commentary focused on "Ellington's" music and its ability to convey spirituality, especially in reference to Duke Ellington's rejection of the term "jazz" to describe his compositional style and sound.¹⁰¹ The music, as well as the spirituality it conveyed, was Duke's own, and was described as having the sincerity and joyfulness that was expected in worship. Additional commentary focused on the importance of the words "In the Beginning God" and their essential role in the *Sacred Concert* as a broader composition.¹⁰² The virtuosity of Ellington's Orchestra was highly touted in the press following the concert, with one particular anecdote being the center of several of the articles: "Drummer Sam Woodyard's cymbals were loud, and when trumpet player 'Cat' Anderson reached his highest, piercing note, Ellington leaned over to the microphone and said: 'That's as high as it will go.' Gabriel couldn't have praised the Lord with a better horn."¹⁰³ The Orchestra featured some of the

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Serge Huff, "Composer Duke Ellington in Top Form: Sacred Jazz Concert Is Effective," *Phoenix Gazette*, November 11, 1966.

¹⁰⁰ Serge Huff, "Composer Duke Ellington in Top Form".

¹⁰¹ Reva Berger, "Religion, Royalty Come Together at Concert," *Lady Fare, Arizona Republic*, November 12, 1966.

¹⁰² William L. Doudna, "Nothing Incongruous About This Jazz in a Cathedral," *Arizona Republic*, November 11, 1966.

¹⁰³ Herehold, "Duke Ellington Performs In Cathedral".

all-time greats of jazz that laid down splendid solos¹⁰⁴ and, “After the opening number, ‘Come Sunday,’ someone could have tap danced in the chancel and the church-pillar types would have applauded loudly. As a matter of fact, that’s exactly what happened.”¹⁰⁵

Bunny Briggs, Ellington’s tap dancing star of the song “David Danced Before the Lord with All His Might,” was another high point of the concert. Briggs’ 8-minute marathon tap dancing and unbelievable dexterity was met with hearty applause.¹⁰⁶ Reverend Robert Herehold wrote in the *National Catholic Reporter* that “elderly women with mink stoles approved audibly as this young man displayed incredible agility and endurance, while a smiling, gray-haired man beat time against the side of his pew.”¹⁰⁷

One last moment stood out for listeners—namely, William Fairfield Brown’s original composition “Go, Labor On!” The piece was well received, even though every article commented on its dissonance, with one calling it, “an adventure in atonality, disturbing and exciting, and powerful in its total effect.”¹⁰⁸ Another hailed it as a “dramatic work complete with riffs, boisterous percussion, scat chorus, screech trumpet and some great 9th, 11th, and 13th chords that wouldn’t quit was warmly applauded.”¹⁰⁹

The evening was a success, and although some Trinity members did not approve of the concerts, Ellington’s *Sacred Concert* clearly made an impression on the people who witnessed his music in Trinity Cathedral. Serge Huff, in the *Phoenix Gazette* finishes his article by saying,

we commend Dean Usher for his part in making this form of art available to his congregation and community, we can’t help wondering how many other local churches would be so progressive in their thinking. In our opinion it was a breath

¹⁰⁴ Doudna, “Nothing Incongruous About This Jazz in a Cathedral”.

¹⁰⁵ Herehold, “Duke Ellington Performs In Cathedral”.

¹⁰⁶ Doudna, “Nothing Incongruous About This Jazz in a Cathedral”.

¹⁰⁷ Robert M. Herehold, Rev., “Duke Ellington Performs in Cathedral,” *Tucson Daily Citizen*, November 12, 1966.

¹⁰⁸ Doudna, “Nothing Incongruous About This Jazz in a Cathedral”.

¹⁰⁹ Serge Huff, “Composer Duke Ellington in Top Form: Sacred Jazz Concert Is Effective,” *Phoenix Gazette*, November 11, 1966.

of fresh air descending on what perhaps is an order of service or tradition which, musically speaking, is far removed from the people it intends to serve.¹¹⁰

The positive reactions—from both the Trinity membership and community at large—were abundant, although there were some exceptions. There is a story, still told at Trinity today, of a member of the Altar Guild who, the morning after the concert, gathered other Guild members to help scrub down Trinity’s pews because black people had been sitting in them only the night before. Even so, it is said that this particular woman was an exception.

Richard also recalls the few repercussions that arose from the jazz concert at Trinity—one, specifically, sticks out in his mind. There was a member of the Vestry whose wife was a very prominent member of the community and member of the Cathedral. She did not attend the concert and spoke to Dean Usher after the concert, indicating that she would not be back because he had allowed a “niggress” to sing in the Cathedral. This experience was impactful for the Dean and his son and became a learning experience for the young man, given his recent move from urban Detroit to recently-integrated Phoenix.

¹¹⁰ Serge Huff, “Composer Duke Ellington in Top Form”.



Figure 6. The only picture of the inside of Trinity Cathedral during Ellington's *First Sacred Concert*. Used with permission from Trinity Cathedral, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries.

The two November 10th performances at Trinity Cathedral were only the beginning of a full weekend of events for Duke Ellington and his orchestra in Phoenix. On Friday, November 11th, Duke Ellington held two events. The first was a press meeting at the Hotel Westward Ho (613 North Central Avenue), which was an informal question-and-answer session and discussion of the previous night's concert at Trinity and upcoming commitments.¹¹¹ That night, Ellington and his band made a more traditional jazz-club appearance at Phoenix Star Theater—now Celebrity Theater—located on 32nd

¹¹¹ "Press Club Forum to Hear Ellington," *Arizona Republic*, February 11, 1966.

Street and Fillmore.¹¹² The Star Theater, having opened less than three years before Ellington's concert, played host to touring musicians and theatrical productions during that time.

On Saturday afternoon, Duke Ellington returned to Trinity Cathedral to host a workshop on rock, jazz, and folk music, sponsored by Trinity Cathedral and local radio station KRUX. Some of the local groups included P-Nut Butter, the Young Men, the Four of Us, the Cortez High Madrigal Singers, and the Jazz sextet from ASU, to name a few. When speaking about the importance of the workshop to the youth of Phoenix, Ellington said, "I want them to realize that their music is valuable. Adults are always knocking it. I want them to see that there are other people that think it's a pretty good scene too."¹¹³

Ellington's appearance at Del Webb's TowneHouse on the night of Saturday, November 12th, seems to have been a private event. The concert booking appears in both Ellington's calendar and his Orchestra's 1966 Itinerary, but it was never advertised, or written about in the local newspapers. Little else is known about this particular appearance; however, two details are illuminated by hotel receipts found in the NMAH Duke Ellington Collection. First, Ellington had to rent an electric organ through the hotel for the TowneHouse appearance. Second, Ellington and his musicians stayed at Del Webb's TowneHouse during their five-day trip to Phoenix—a hotel that, two years earlier, would have likely been off-limits to Duke and his black band due to segregation.

The last booked appearance in Phoenix was a public dance held at Del Webb's TowneHouse on Sunday, November 13th. The dance, with doors opening at 8 P.M., was hosted by Phoenix's most prominent Jewish congregation at the time—the Temple Beth

¹¹² Kyle Lawson, "Star Theatre/Celebrity Theatre," *Phoenix Theater: An Eccentric History*, accessed January 21, 2017, <http://phoenixtheaterhistory.com/companies/star-theatre-celebrity-theatre/>.

¹¹³ "Press Club Forum to Hear Ellington," *Arizona Republic*, February 11, 1966.

Israel Brotherhood. The night offered, “countless local fans a first-time opportunity to dance to the incomparable Ellington beat.”¹¹⁴ The article continues to tempt readers into coming out to the dance by explaining that Duke’s, “cool wit and highly charged personality evoke the admiration of many great performers. Urbane and suave, he is the master of sagacious humor that makes all audiences captive” and a man that was sure to fill the dance floor.¹¹⁵ Not only was the weekend was a whirlwind, but the production and success of the concerts at Trinity led to a lasting relationship—one that would lead to the production of a second sacred concert.



Figure 7. Duke Ellington and Dean Elmer B. Usher outside Trinity Cathedral after the *First Sacred Concert* on November 10, 1966. Used with permission from Trinity Cathedral, Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Library.

¹¹⁴ Star Theatre Advertisement, “Duke Ellington and his orchestra in Jazz Concert,” *Phoenix Gazette*.

¹¹⁵ TowneHouse Advertisement, “Duke Ellington Dance,” *Phoenix Gazette*.

Duke Ellington and Harold Weicker

At the time of his first phone conversation with Duke Ellington in 1966, Harold Weicker had little idea that the production of the *Sacred Concert* at Trinity Cathedral would lead to a strong, lasting friendship that would last until Ellington's death in 1974. Weicker attributes the beginnings of their friendship to a party that took place after the Trinity concerts in Phoenix's Playboy Club (3033 N. Central Avenue)—a swanky, jacket-and-tie club, just up Central Avenue, owned and operated by Hugh Hefner.¹¹⁶ It was a small party that included John Yaryan, the producer of the Concert of Sacred Music at Grace Cathedral and friend of Duke Ellington and his wife Suzy, as well as some of Ellington's band and Duke himself.

After some time, Ellington asked what Harold thought of the music and the concept of his *First Sacred Concert*. Harold recognized at that moment that his reply would be a, "make-it or break-it move."¹¹⁷ Harold's remarks were honest and may have been a little bold for someone who was just getting to know one of the most prominent and well-established musicians in American history. He replied that, although the concert was beautiful and moving, it was all repurposed music. However, Harold followed up his criticism was followed up with a question—would Duke Ellington be willing to write another *Sacred Concert* from scratch? At that time, Duke Ellington was already in the beginning stages of writing his second of three *Sacred Concerts* and followed up the question by asking Harold to produce the new concerts.

¹¹⁶ Geri Koeppel, "The Phoenix Playboy Club was the place to see and be seen in the 1960s and '70s," *East Valley Tribune*, December 14, 2003, http://www.eastvalleytribune.com/get_out/article_e73f7606-1561-50a0-9493-8f63982ce698.html.

¹¹⁷ Harold Weicker interview conducted by Ryan Downey on November 14, 2016.

Canon Weicker's tenure at Trinity Cathedral was cut short for two reasons. First, moneyed members continued to leave the church and take their financial support elsewhere, and second, he wanted to be available to help Ellington produce the second concert when the time came. After his resignation from Trinity Cathedral in early 1967, Canon Weicker ended up at a church in Connecticut, closer to his home diocese of New York, and seat of Bishop Horace W. B. Donegan, one of Weicker's long-time friends.

It was at Bishop Donegan's Cathedral, St. John the Divine—the second largest Cathedral church in the world—that Weicker would ultimately produce Duke Ellington's *Second Concert of Sacred Music*, along with Ellington's sister, Ruth. Over the previous two-and-a-half years, the *First Sacred Concert* garnered acclaim and renown, and on January 19th, 1968, with the help of his friend Harold Weicker, Duke Ellington premiered his equally successful *Second Sacred Concert*.

The popularity of the *First Sacred Concert* almost guaranteed the success of the *Second*. The Ellington business machine, along with Weicker, were prepared for the outpouring of booking requests in the months to come following the premier of the *Second Sacred Concert* on January 19, 1968. They assembled a brochure that detailed every aspect that would lead to the successful production of one of Ellington's *Second Sacred Concerts*. Calling it "Duke Ellington *Sacred Concert*," the brochure's cover features a bright fuchsia photo of Ellington and his band and the first page of the brochure details the premiere:

"On January 19th, 1968, Duke Ellington presented an entirely new sacred concert in the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, by invitation of the Bishop of New York. An enthusiastic audience of over six thousand people jammed into the New York cathedral, and the concert was conceded to be superior to its predecessor. Ellington had obviously profited from his experience with the first, and he had had more time for preparation. The program, full of contrasts, was superbly routined."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ Ellington Sacred Concert brochure, Duke Ellington Collection, 1903-1988, Archives Center National Museum of American History.

The comprehensive brochure goes on to detail “What the Concert is—and Does,” and provides sayings and quotes by the composer, advice on advertising, including comprehensive poster design proportions, radio and T.V. coverage, acoustic recommendations, ticket pricing (from \$25.00 to \$100.00), seven sample press releases, music program layout templates, and a modicum of praise for the premiere concert.¹¹⁹

After the premiere, Canon Weicker toured New England with Ellington and his Orchestra, helping to produce *Sacred Concerts* before he admitted to himself that he had been trained as a priest and, “needed to get on with it.”¹²⁰ However, the two men remained friends.

Weicker referred to Ellington by his “Christian name,” Edward, and called him “the light of his life.” Weicker reminisced about a particular story that came to represent their friendship. Harold had recently gotten a divorce and was rather depressed. While back in New York City, after touring, Ellington called Harold and asked if he would like to join in on some general errand-running to take his mind off things. Harold replied, “Well, for you, I’m doing nothing.” Harold hopped into Duke’s limo and they went around to several stores, simply chatting. Finally, back after a long day, they stopped in front of Harold’s apartment. Duke said, “Harold, let me tell you something. You’re probably not going to accept it now, but think on this and the day will come that you will.” Harold replied, “Sure, what is it?” Ellington continued, “You can never lose someone who loves you.” Harold replied, “Edward, you know that she left me.” Duke responded simply, “just think about it.” Harold remembers this instance as, “one of the most beautiful things I have ever been told.” The statement changed Weicker’s outlook on life and eased him out of his post-divorce depression. To Weicker it relayed that love

¹¹⁹ Ellington Sacred Concert brochure, Duke Ellington Collection, 1903-1988, Archives Center National Museum of American History.

¹²⁰ Harold Weicker interview conducted by Ryan Downey on November 14, 2016.

can transcend the pain and anxiety caused by divorce by underscoring what were once feelings of love.

In summary, the production and execution of the *First Sacred Concert* at Trinity Cathedral had immediate and lasting impacts on the Cathedral and Phoenix. The positive reviews recounted people dancing in their seats and enjoying Duke Ellington's infectious personality throughout the weekend of November 10th to 14th, 1966. But the concerts also spawned a lasting friendship that helped support the music and production of the *Second Sacred Concert*, bearing lasting effects on both men until Ellington's death in 1974. Fortunately, this story will live on through this document; less than four months after our interview in late October, 2016, Harold Weicker passed away in his home in Mexico.

Duke Ellington: His *Sacred Concerts* and Spirituality

Duke Ellington's *Sacred Concerts* have elicited both criticism and praise and been discussed at length in resources like Terry Teachout's *Duke: A Life of Duke Ellington*, Harvey G. Cohen's book *Duke Ellington's America*, and Janna Tull Steed's *Duke Ellington: A Spiritual Biography*.¹²¹ However, even as thoroughly analyzed as Duke Ellington's *Sacred Concerts* have been, there remain several interesting, and previously unexplored, storylines related to Duke Ellington's November appearance in Trinity Cathedral. In addition to summarizing Ellington's late career, the importance of his personal spirituality, and his *Sacred Concerts*, this chapter will highlight Herman McCoy (1914-1996), the musician and conductor responsible for preparing the choir for the *First Sacred Concert*—an obscure, but central, figure whose story would otherwise be lost in music history. It will also serve to connect Ellington's *Sacred Concerts* to the Episcopal Church in general. Duke Ellington's belief in God never manifested itself in dedication to a single denomination, but the influence of Episcopal church and its clergy, teachings, philosophy, and writings cannot be denied in light of evidence to be discussed here.¹²²

Duke Ellington and His Sacred Concerts

Edward Kennedy Ellington was born in a middle-class African American neighborhood of Washington D.C., on April 29, 1899. The turn-of-the-century

¹²¹ Terry Teachout, *Duke: A Life of Duke Ellington* (New York: Gotham Books, Penguin Group, 2013); Harvey G. Cohen, *Duke Ellington's America*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Janna Tull Steed, *Duke Ellington: A Spiritual Biography* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999).

¹²² The following brief summary of Ellington's biography in no way captures the scope and stature of his career. Neither does it engage more than superficially with the complexities of race relations in the U. S. during Ellington's life. As Cohen writes, Ellington considered his music "a form of activism that reflected [his] long-term priorities of infiltration and circumvention, rather than confrontation" (2-3). I refer readers to that monograph and other, longer studies for the fuller story of Ellington's career in the context of the turbulent times in which he lived and worked.

Washington D.C. into which Ellington was born “proved a perfect springboard for his genius and ambitions. It was the center of black musical and intellectual resistance to racism...the city was a bastion of the black middle class, to which Ellington’s family tenuously belonged.”¹²³ These neighborhoods played an important role in Ellington’s lifelong conceptions of race, music, and spirituality.

Throughout Edward’s childhood, his parents emphasized the importance that no race is better than the other and that ultimately, racial equality would be won through “high achievement and radiating a sense of respectability,” rather than through political protest and uprising.¹²⁴ Ellington’s African heritage was important to him, as was telling the story of the African American journey. At the same time, this desire to tell that story never outweighed his belief that all people were created equal in God’s eyes.¹²⁵

Ellington’s mother instilled in him, at a very early age, the importance of a Christian God, a deep belief that helped establish a personal spirituality that would inform his three *Sacred Concerts* late in his career. Because of his family’s dedication to—and participation in—two different denominations of Christianity, Ellington was exposed to both the more traditional hymns of his father’s church, John Wesley African Methodist Episcopal (A. M. E.) Church Zion, and the freer, and more improvisational musical style of his mother’s church,¹²⁶ Nineteenth Street Baptist.¹²⁷ Even when attending these two churches, “the denominational differences were not made clear to Edward and [that] didn’t seem to matter.”¹²⁸ This sentiment resonates throughout his

¹²³ Harvey G. Cohen, *Duke Ellington’s America*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010) 10.

¹²⁴ Harvey G. Cohen, *Duke Ellington’s America*, 9.

¹²⁵ Janna Tull Steed, *Duke Ellington: A Spiritual Biography* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999) 163-64.

¹²⁶ Wilbert Weldon Hill, “The Sacred Concerts of Edward Kennedy ‘Duke’ Ellington,” (PhD dissertation, The Catholic University of America, 1995) 2-3.

¹²⁷ Janna Tull Steed, *Duke Ellington: A Spiritual Biography*, 29

¹²⁸ Steed, 29.

entire career, during which he studied writings from most of the Christian denominations as well as Judaism—and perhaps focused more on building his own beliefs about God rather than taking on the teachings of one particular Christian denomination.¹²⁹

Ellington grew up attending churches where the Western-European style church music was seldom heard, and at home, his parents played music that would have been commonplace in a middle-class home. His mother, Daisy, played the piano “fairly well,” and “Duke speaks of her playing sentimental pieces from the standard semi-classical repertoire.”¹³⁰ This exposure to a wide range of musical styles and sounds surely influenced the young man’s musical pedigree. Ellington’s father, James Edward (J. E.), also played piano. Edward and his sister, Ruth, both recount times that J. E. played famous operatic repertoire on the piano by ear, “however, he seems to have spent more of his time organizing what were called barbershop quartets and teaching the other singers their parts from the piano.”¹³¹

J. E. and Daisy supported their son’s artistic endeavors and young Edward would find an interest in, and talent for, painting and drawing. Edward began taking piano lessons from a woman named Marietta Clinkscales¹³² when he was seven, but he quickly lost interest and became more interested in sports. When he was a teenager, “for a brief time, he sold refreshments at the city ballpark in order to watch the Washington Senators play.”¹³³ Not until 1913 did Ellington return to the piano after having heard a

¹²⁹ NMAH Ellington Collection houses religious books and other materials from several Christian denominations.

¹³⁰ James Lincoln Collier, *Duke Ellington* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) 18.

¹³¹ Collier, *Duke Ellington*, 18.

¹³² Almost all of Ellington’s biographers comment on the woman’s all too fitting musical name. Some even say that it might happen to be too perfect to be her actual name.

¹³³ Terry Teachout, *Duke: A Life of Duke Ellington* (New York: Gotham Books, Penguin Group, 2013) 31.

ragtime piano roll by Philadelphia pianist, Harvey Brooks. After 1913, Ellington began playing the poolrooms and clubs that would eventually lead him to New York City, and would eventually launch an international career spanning six decades.¹³⁴

The late 1910s were formative for Ellington in many ways. It was during this time that Duke Ellington first began to form bands and “his repertoire included songs associated with both black and white culture, and he played for both black and white audiences, almost always segregated.”¹³⁵ Also during this time, Ellington gained experience with running and managing bands both musically and professionally.¹³⁶ The combination of musical talent and business acumen kept Duke Ellington at the forefront of American music for much of his life.¹³⁷

For Duke Ellington, the 1920s and ‘30s were a time of growth and success. During this time, Ellington would compose his first extended pieces, “Creole Rhapsody” and “Reminiscing in Tempo.” These pieces would serve as a gateway to his *Sacred Concerts*. Here, Cohen writes about the first of these works,

Ellington’s extended pieces...proved to be one area in which economic motives did not mesh smoothly with artistic motives. Many reasons existed for the relative commercial failure of these pieces. First, until the mid-1940s publishers tended to refuse songs that lasted more than thirty-two bars, resulting in roughly 3 minutes of music. Not only were they too long for the standard 10-inch 78-rpm record format, but they also entailed additional pages in printed sheet music, which ate into profits....An additional problem ensued because, even if the public bought sheet music for such extended pieces...it would be difficult or impossible for most musicians to reproduce the intricacy of Ellington’s arrangements and the unique timbres of his instrumentalists.¹³⁸

Despite cultural and economic roadblocks, Ellington continued to work towards longer pieces. This investigation of musical form and length would eventually lead Ellington to

¹³⁴ Terry Teachout, *Duke*, 31.

¹³⁵ Cohen, 20.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹³⁸ Cohen, 75.

experiment with blurring the lines between the shorter length of popular music and longer-form classical music.

On January 23, 1943, during his Carnegie Hall debut performance, Ellington premiered his longest-running extended work to date, *Black, Brown, and Beige: A Tone Parallel to the History of the American Negro*, which served as a major test for his long-form compositional style.¹³⁹ Ellington had written the forty-five-minute, three-movement piece in only six weeks. *Black, Brown, and Beige*, which programmatically followed the history and experience of African Americans, “from the African continent to the African American contribution to World War II,”¹⁴⁰ was not met with the amount of success that Ellington likely wanted. The short gestation period of the work showed through and critics were less than accepting. Terry Teachout, in his book *Duke: A Life of Duke Ellington*, attributes the unsuccessful premiere of *Black, Brown, and Beige* to Ellington’s lack of orchestration experience, explaining that “eight years after *Reminiscing in Tempo*, Ellington had yet to acquaint himself with the elementary principles of symphonic musical organization known to all classically trained composers.”¹⁴¹ Indeed, this sentiment of compositional disorganization and lack of musical form would arise again in the criticism of Ellington’s *First Sacred Concert*. Though the reviews were mixed, the 1943 Carnegie Hall concert and the premiere of *Black, Brown, and Beige* would help inform the creation and composition of Duke Ellington’s remaining extended musical works for the remainder of his career including the three *Sacred Concerts*.

¹³⁹ Harvey G. Cohen, “Duke Ellington and Black, Brown, and Beige: The Composer as Historian at Carnegie Hall,” *American Quarterly*, 56, no. 4 (2004): 1003, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2004.0051>.

¹⁴⁰ Teachout, 238.

¹⁴¹ Teachout, 242.

The post-war years from 1946 to 1955 were the least successful and most trying for Duke Ellington and his orchestra. Ellington biographers write similarly about this time. James Lincoln Collier calls it Ellington's "Decline and Fall." The era of the big band and swing was over and Rock and Roll began to take its place. The generation of listeners that supported the boom of the big band were aging, and though Ellington was successful in keeping his band playing year-round, "for the first time he dipped into his sizeable song royalties to offset losses."¹⁴²

In 1946, Ellington would try his hand at Broadway musicals with *Beggar's Holiday*, fashioned after John Gay's *Beggar's Opera*. Ellington's first attempt at a musical was met with mostly negative reviews. *Beggar's Holiday* had the unfriendly company and competition of enduring musical hits like *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Carousel*, and *Oklahoma!* Additionally, though Vernon Duke's *Cabin in the Sky* (1940) and other outstanding examples of all-black casts preceded *Beggar's Holiday*, Harvey Cohen believes that, "*Beggar's Holiday* was probably also harmed by the prominent black presence on stage, a rarity on Broadway previously and for years afterward."¹⁴³

Life for black musicians became increasingly difficult in the 1950s as a result of the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 and subsequent efforts of desegregation. Black musicians were banned from shows, were not allowed into motels and hotels while on tour, and there were countless stories like that of Louis Bellson and his band, who were unable to "purchase no better food for dinner than sardine cans."¹⁴⁴ Although he never explicitly attributed his aversion to shows in the South to rising racial vitriol, to avoid such awkward and embarrassing situations like Bellson's, Ellington made it a point not to play more than six dates in the South, and no

¹⁴² Cohen, 256.

¹⁴³ Cohen, 273.

¹⁴⁴ Cohen, 303.

dates in the Deep South aside from his “Biggest Tour of 1951,” between 1950 and 1955.¹⁴⁵ In the end, it was Ellington’s ingenuity and ability to “deal productively with unpleasant times” that would give his reputation a boost.¹⁴⁶

Though the previous ten years previous had proven difficult for Ellington and his band, Ellington regained popularity from the mid-‘50s that lasted until his death in 1974. Scholars point to Ellington’s appearance at the Newport Jazz Festival in 1956 as the “turning point” that brought the bandleader back to the top of American music.¹⁴⁷ An abundance of good press surrounded the appearance where the band was hailed as the “most underrated in the country” by *Downbeat*¹⁴⁸; *Time* featured Ellington on the cover of its August issue; and months before the appearance, *Time* also ran a piece entitled, “The Duke Rides Again,” acclaiming Ellington’s return to the spotlight.¹⁴⁹

The initial resurgence was spurred on by the stabilization of personnel in the band along with the return of some old faces, helping to codify and revive a musical sound that had been lost. Having left to begin his own band, Johnny Hodges, Ellington’s famed alto saxophonist from 1928 to 1951, returned to Ellington’s group in 1955. Trombonists Juan Tizol and Lawrence Brown returned in 1960, though Tizol returned for only a short stint, and soon thereafter, trumpeter Cootie Williams (active with Ellington’s orchestra from 1928-1940)¹⁵⁰ returned, as well.¹⁵¹ Composer-arranger Billy Strayhorn, one of Ellington’s most favored confidants and friends, also returned to work full-time with the band. Like many of the other musicians who rejoined the fold,

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Collier, 268.

¹⁴⁸ Cohen, 319.

¹⁴⁹ Collier, 268.

¹⁵⁰ C. Gerald Fraser, “Cootie Williams, Ellington Trumpeter, Dead,” *New York Times*, accessed April 12, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/1985/09/16/arts/cootie-williams-ellington-trumpeter-dead.html>.

¹⁵¹ Collier, 269.

“Strayhorn found that it would be more artistically and commercially rewarding to remain with Ellington.”¹⁵²

During this time, the band began to tour more, playing more one-night gigs around the country, and as a result began bringing in much more money. Playing for dances, night-clubs, and colleges around the U.S. was netting Ellington’s musicians around \$300 to \$600 a week and the salary would only increase over the next few years.¹⁵³ By 1964, Ellington was receiving over \$130,000 annually in royalties alone, and the band was being booked for anywhere from \$1,000 to \$7,500 a night.¹⁵⁴ Though the income seems exorbitant, the cost of running the Duke Ellington machine—a band that consisted of anywhere from fourteen to twenty players, additional stage hands and crew, with insurance and music union fees—netted a salary of only about \$25,000 annually for Ellington as a bandleader, a sum that would have the same buying power as \$193,455.13 in 2017.¹⁵⁵

Also integral to Ellington’s resurgence in the late-1950s was his renewed popularity within the black community during the turbulent civil rights period. Ellington was awarded the Spingarn Medal, the NAACP’s most prestigious honor, in 1959, and the accolade “rekindled the passions of those who felt that Ellington either did not do enough, did nothing, or even harmed the efforts to gain civil rights for African Americans.”¹⁵⁶

The 1960s were a time of great change in all areas of life in America. The Civil Rights Movement reached its peak with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and

¹⁵² Cohen, 319.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Duke Ellington Itinerary, Duke Ellington Collection, 1903-1988, Archives Center National Museum of American History.

¹⁵⁵ Cohen, 473; “CPI Inflation Calculator,” Bureau of Labor Statistics, accessed March 17, 2017, https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm.

¹⁵⁶ Cohen, 380.

the Voting Rights Act in 1965. These monumental cultural changes were paralleled by changes in the major religions of the United States, ultimately leading the way for Ellington's *First Sacred Concert*. Janna Tull Steed provides a concise summary of what was occurring in the religious circles of America during this time:

Since the end of World War II, major Protestant denominations (predominantly white) had been exploring ecumenical cooperation through the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. New translations of the Bible into modern English were published by groups of Protestant and Roman Catholic scholars...Jazz masses and Protestant jazz services gained a degree of popularity in urban areas, although the practice was still seen as a radical departure from traditional worship.¹⁵⁷

The new experimentation led to religious conditions that were perfect for Ellington's *First Sacred Concert*. Sincere correspondence regarding Ellington's appearance at Grace Cathedral (San Francisco) began in October of 1962, nearly three years before Ellington would appear in the Cathedral atop Nob Hill.

This initial correspondence regarding the commissioning of the *First Sacred Concert* was a letter from Grace Cathedral Canon, John S. Yaryan, to Ellington—at that time, Yaryan had already met Ellington and admired his music. Duke never replied to Yaryan's October 1962 letter and in a follow-up letter from Dean C. Julian Bartlett of Grace Cathedral, Dean Bartlett writes to Ellington, “I was most interested to hear from him [Yaryan] when we were together recently of the possibility of your interest in conducting a concert of your sacred music of your own composition.”¹⁵⁸ The letter details questions that Bartlett, Yaryan, and Grace Cathedral had about the proposed musical content, the new commission, the feasibility of travel to Grace Cathedral over the next year, and the cost of the entire project. Additionally, this letter from Dean Bartlett relays the importance of what a concert of sacred music by Duke Ellington could mean for both

¹⁵⁷ Steed, 115.

¹⁵⁸ Dean C. Julian Bartlett to Mr. Ellington, 4 January 1963, Duke Ellington Collection, 1903-1988, Archives Center National Museum of American History.

his career and the musical world in general: “I am confident that such an event would be a signal one in our time, and I know of no one better able to ‘carry the day’ than you!”¹⁵⁹

Duke Ellington’s appearance was to be part of the “Festivals of Grace,” a year-and-a-half long dedication and consecration celebration for the Cathedral beginning on the weekend of November 20th, 1964.¹⁶⁰ Planning for the “Festivals of Grace” laid out two goals for successful implementation; first, “So to present Grace Cathedral to the community, the nation and to the world in such a way that people will be moved to come to the Cathedral to share in our total on-going program of worship”; and second, “So to present the Church’s concern for as many areas of human interest and life as possible, that the immediate relevance of the Christian religion to all areas of life will be set forth clearly for education and deepening commitment to all people.” The “Festivals” included, among others, symposia and conferences on “The Church and the Refugee,” “The Church and the Sexual Problem,” “The Church and the Alcoholic,” “The Law and the Christian Ethic,” and “Christianity and the Arts.” The celebration, lasting a year-and-a-half, also included musical events featuring a “Diocesan Choir Festival,” “the Peninsula Symphony and Richard Purvis at the Great Organ,” the “Elgar Choir of Vancouver, British Columbia,” and of course, “The Ellington Concert.”¹⁶¹

As planning for the Festivals of Grace continues, Yaryan sent several letters to Ellington without receiving any reply from Ellington. Several of Yaryan’s letters are held in the Ellington Collection, each indicating increasing desperation. Yaryan writes to Ellington while he was at the Chicago Hilton in April of 1964: “Attached hereto you will

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ February 12, 1964, Funnily enough, the Cathedral is the seat of the Bishop of the California Diocese. At the time of the premiere of the First Sacred Concert, James Pike was the Bishop of California. In one letter to Ellington about the Sacred Concert, Canon Yaryan handwrites a P.S. saying that because of the Cathedral’s location on Nob Hill it is being called “Pike’s Peak” or “Pike’s Pique” depending on the Bishop’s attitude.

¹⁶¹ Cohen, 461.

find Dean Bartett's letter to you of January 4 and mine of February 12, both of which no doubt went astray. I believe they outline the freedom which you would have in a concert in Grace Cathedral....We sincerely pray that you will have the time to help us celebrate the completion of this the first American Cathedral."¹⁶² Finally, Later that year, Ellington invited the clergy of Grace to a weeklong appearance in Redwood City, California, where he would ultimately agree to composing and premiering his *Concert of Sacred Music* at Grace Cathedral.¹⁶³

Ellington had already begun working on the music for the occasion, though not without "a certain amount of trepidation."¹⁶⁴ Ellington reveals in *Music is My Mistress*, that being approached to compose the *Concert of Sacred Music* was an extraordinary opportunity, writing, "Now I can say openly...what I have been saying to myself on my knees."¹⁶⁵ Ellington's trepidation didn't come from a lack of faith or understanding, or even how to put that into music; rather, it came from the challenge of communicating his beliefs. He writes, slightly prophetically, "Communication itself is what baffles the multitude. It is both so difficult and so simple. Of all man's fears, I think men are most afraid of being what they are—in direct communication with the world at large. They fear reprisals, the most personal of which is that they 'won't be understood.'"¹⁶⁶

In the press and media coverage surrounding the concert, the word "jazz" was intentionally left out because of the same reprisals that were manifest at the concerts at Trinity Cathedral.¹⁶⁷ Instead, when confronted with the question of the legitimacy of jazz

¹⁶² The Rev. Canon John S. Yaryan to Mr. Edward K. Ellington, 1 April 1964, Duke Ellington Collection, 1903-1988, Archives Center National Museum of American History.

¹⁶³ Cohen, 461.

¹⁶⁴ Edward Kennedy Ellington, *Music is My Mistress* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1973) 261.

¹⁶⁵ Edward Kennedy Ellington, *Music is My Mistress*, 261.

¹⁶⁶ Ellington, *Music is My Mistress*, 261.

¹⁶⁷ Cohen, 461.

in a sacred place in a newspaper interview, Ellington deflected by saying, “I find it difficult to draw the line” between jazz and his own music that many refer to simply as “Ellington’s music.”¹⁶⁸

The *Sacred Concert* that finally came to fruition had its premiere on Thursday, September 16th, 1965. Though there was some new music on the concert, most of the compositions were repurposed melodies from other Ellington compositions. One of the new compositions, “In the Beginning God,” “focuses on the first four words, or more accurately, the first six syllables, of the Bible— ‘In the beginning God.’” Cohen describes the piece as “evocative and stirring” and “one of his most majestic utterances,” and that “‘In the Beginning God’ is perhaps the best original work penned for the *Sacred Concerts*. With its clarion calls of trumpet, low rumbles of baritone sax and vocal, and ringing and pounding drum solo, it seemed designed to suggest the majesty and power of the subject matter and to take advantage of the acoustics of cathedrals.”¹⁶⁹

The band that premiered Ellington’s *First Sacred Concert* consisted of the same musicians that appeared at Trinity Cathedral one year later, save for one. Louie Bellson played drums at Grace Cathedral and was later replaced by Sam Woodyard before the concerts at Trinity Cathedral. The band was accompanied by The Herman McCoy Choir, who sang on “Come Sunday,” “Will You be There?,” “Ninety-Nine Per Cent,” and “Ain’t But the One.”

Like the concerts at Trinity Cathedral, the generally positive reviews were tempered by a few negative reactions from parishioners, the press, and the public.

¹⁶⁸ Bob Robertson, “Ellington to Compose for Church,” *San Francisco Chronicle* August 27, 1965, 11; “Grace Cathedral Presents a Concert of Sacred Music by Duke Ellington” Concert Program, 16 September 1965, Duke Ellington Collection, 1903-1988, Archives Center National Museum of American History; “A Concert of Sacred Music by Duke Ellington” Concert Program, The Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries.

¹⁶⁹ Cohen, 462.

Resistance came from a few sides. As reflected in the comments on concerts at Trinity, some felt that jazz was not acceptable for a church setting was true for the concert at Grace Cathedral. For many, jazz was still representative of the secular world—a world of booze and brothels. For some observers, “especially in the black community, religion could not be as easily melded with the secular world as Ellington wished.”¹⁷⁰ In Ellington’s mind, however, the two worlds were not separate. His intensely personal spirituality was expressed through his music, music which most listeners just happened to categorize as jazz. Ellington used his music to express and glorify “the wonder of God”—it was simply not doctrinal.¹⁷¹ Janna Tull Steed makes an essential counter-argument for what Ellington really did with the presentation of the *First Sacred Concert*:

What he did was to reclaim the sacred origins of jazz and demonstrate that all musical instruments could be employed in the praise of God, just as Psalm 150 commanded. In “Praise God and Dance” in the *Second Sacred Concert*, Ellington didn’t simply exhort hearers to praise God; with horns and drums and cymbals played by master musicians, with choirs, vocal soloists, and joyful dancers, he showed just how it could be done.¹⁷²

Another element that highlighted the meaning and importance of the *First Sacred Concert*’s success was the way that Ellington handled the band’s financials after the premiere. According to the orchestra’s 1966 itinerary, bookings ranged from \$1,000 to \$2,500 for a one-night show to tours grossing \$50,000 like the European tour from January 27th to 31st, 1966.¹⁷³ However, before booking other productions of the *Sacred Concert*, Ellington met with an accountant to figure out how much one performance of the *First Sacred Concert* would cost and only charged that amount—\$5,000.¹⁷⁴ There are also stories of Ellington offsetting a significant portion of the cost of certain *Sacred*

¹⁷⁰ Cohen, 464.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 465

¹⁷² Steed, 138.

¹⁷³ Duke Ellington Itinerary, Duke Ellington Collection, 1903-1988, Archives Center National Museum of American History.

¹⁷⁴ Cohen, 473.

Concert productions for poorer churches. One such instance occurred when the band played the *Sacred Concert* in the Mather Air Force Base Chapel for a band fee of \$750.¹⁷⁵

The success of the *Sacred Concert* at Grace Cathedral brought about several other performances in sacred and secular venues all over the world in the coming years. In the U.S., the first performance at an historically black church occurred on March 10, 1966, at the Brooklyn First AME Zion Church, and the performance of the *First Sacred Concert* held in a secular space was on August 14, 1966, at Lambertville Music Circus in New Jersey.¹⁷⁶ In his brief overview of the *Sacred Concert* performances occurring in the year following the concert at Grace Cathedral, Harvey G. Cohen mentions the concerts at Trinity Cathedral briefly, highlighting the attendance of Barry Goldwater, the scandal between the fourteen clergy and Bishop Pike, and the negative reaction from some of the audience.¹⁷⁷

The premiere of the *Second Sacred Concert*, as already discussed, had strong connections to Ellington's concerts at Trinity Cathedral. In fact, Ellington recalls the event in *Music is My Mistress* Ellington remembers the event, writing:

We gave this concert [the *First Sacred Concert*] in many different cities before congregations of all denominations, from Cambridge Massachusetts, to Cambridge, England, until in 1968 the opportunity occurred to me, suggested by the Reverend Canon Harold Weicker to present an entirely new one at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in New York by the invitation of Bishop Horace W. B. Donegan.

Perhaps even more than in the *First Sacred Concert*, the music of the *Second Sacred Concert* provides a glimpse into Ellington's personal spirituality. More explicitly, it has an even stronger relationship to the teachings of the Episcopal Church, a fact that will be explained later.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 474.

¹⁷⁶ Duke Ellington Itinerary, Duke Ellington Collection, 1903-1988, Archives Center National Museum of American History.

¹⁷⁷ Cohen, 476.

Reviews after the premiere of the *Second Sacred Concert* “were almost uniformly warm and effusive.”¹⁷⁸ One of the *Second Sacred Concert*’s harshest critics was Ellington biographer James Collier, who called “the *Second Sacred Concert*...from an artistic viewpoint, an almost unmitigated disaster.”¹⁷⁹ He continued by then targeting the lyrics in particular, calling them childish and poetic lines that “would not be acceptable coming from a bright high school student.”¹⁸⁰ Not surprisingly, Collier dedicated only ten pages of over 300 in his book to reviewing and analyzing the entirety of the three *Sacred Concerts*. Other scholars and critics disagree with Collier’s negative views and attribute the success of the *Second Sacred Concert* to the simplicity of text and melody.¹⁸¹

The *Sacred Concerts* gave Duke Ellington an outlet to finally express his spirituality in a way that was most natural to him—through his music. The success of these concerts would sustain the later part of his career until his death. The personal spirituality that shone through in his music was heavily influenced by the people and teachings of the Episcopal Church.

Herman McCoy

The retellings of the story of the *Sacred Concert* at Grace Cathedral often leaves out the choir and its conductor, Herman McCoy, and their importance in the final production. Herman McCoy is a rarely mentioned and often forgotten figure in much of the writing and research on Duke Ellington. Herman McCoy, the conductor whom Ellington calls “a great help” and an “encouraging factor”¹⁸² to the performance of the *First Sacred Concert*, was born in Kansas City, Missouri on January 27, 1914, and later

¹⁷⁸ Cohen, 482.

¹⁷⁹ Collier, 294.

¹⁸⁰ Collier, 295.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 482.

¹⁸² Ellington, *Music is My Mistress*, 280.

moved to Denver, Colorado when he was young. He attended and studied music at West Virginia State College, an historically black school, Western State College, Denver University, and Cal-Western University.¹⁸³ A 1952 article from the *Los Angeles Sentinel* includes Julliard in the list of schools that Mr. McCoy attended, though this is the only instance during which McCoy is said to have attended the famous music school.¹⁸⁴

After school, McCoy became a musician and choral conductor in the Navy during World War II. Towards the middle of the war, “In 1942, the Navy enlisted 5,000 African American musicians, such as trumpeter Clark Terry, saxophonist Von Freeman, and composer Gerald Wilson,”¹⁸⁵ to play in bands and orchestras, while others musicians helped train additional recruits to be sent as far away as Guadalcanal.¹⁸⁶ Two of these jazz musicians, saxophonist Willie Smith and flutist Buddy Collette, specifically remember their time in the Navy with Herman McCoy. Collette recalls McCoy as “a great choral director, the finest,” and that McCoy would end up doing a lot of wonderful things on the West Coast and in Los Angeles in the 1950s.¹⁸⁷

In 1945, after the war, Herman McCoy became one of the primary vocal arrangers for the Lionel Hampton orchestra and the vocal group that accompanied the orchestra for a few years in the mid to late 40s, “The Hamp-tones,” or the “Hamptonians.”¹⁸⁸ Lionel Hampton never mentions McCoy by name in his autobiography *Hamp*, but the discography includes McCoy’s name on the June 20, 1947 broadcast from Culver City,

¹⁸³ Harmony McCoy, *Harmony McCoy’s Diet Cookbook*. Murrieta, California: Harmon-E-Enterprises, 1972.

¹⁸⁴ “McCoy Swing Choir Great,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, July 3, 1952.

¹⁸⁵ “History,” Navy Band Great Lakes website, accessed March 4, 2017, <http://www.netc.navy.mil/nstc/navyband/history.html>.

¹⁸⁶ Stanley Dance, *The World of Swing* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1974) 104.

¹⁸⁷ Buddy Collette and Steven Isoardi, *Jazz Generations: A Life in American Music and Society* (London: Continuum, 2000) 56; Lionel Hampton and James Haskins, *Hamp: An Autobiography* (New York: Warner Books, 1989) 209.

¹⁸⁸ Harmony McCoy, *Harmony McCoy’s Diet Cookbook*.

California, and a recording on August 6th of the same year.¹⁸⁹ After 1947, recordings of the Hamp-tones do not include Herman McCoy in the group.

In the early 1950s, and after his time with Lionel Hampton, McCoy created “The Herman McCoy Swing Choir.” With its beginnings as a choir of four young men from UCLA, The Herman McCoy Swing Choir would eventually become the group to premiere and record the choral parts of the Ellington’s *First Sacred Concert*. In the early ‘50s, the choir was referred to under several different names including, “Herman McCoy Singers,” “Herman McCoy Choir,” and the “UCLA Herman McCoy Swing Singers.”¹⁹⁰ From 1952 to 1954, the choir’s membership ranged from 14-26 all-white college students.

McCoy’s earliest appearance with his “Swing Choir” seems to be in January, 1952, on the *Colgate Comedy Hour* starring Eddie Cantor, where they were billed as “Herman McCoy’s UCLA Swing Choir.”¹⁹¹ Cantor admits to having discovered the vocal jazz group while they were singing at a fraternity house at UCLA and then conceived a “collegiate-themed” show to host the singers.¹⁹² Bedecked in dark gowns and plaid jackets, the young women and men sang “Lullaby of Broadway” and settings of George Gershwin’s “Someone to Watch Over Me,” and “S Wonderful, ‘S Marvelous.” Ironically, the Swing Choir’s set of songs, conducted by Herman McCoy himself, was followed by a rendition of “Love is Sweeping the Country,” by Eddie Cantor and a co-host singing and dancing in blackface.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁹ Lionel Hampton and James Haskins, *Hamp: An Autobiography*, 207-209.

¹⁹⁰ “Herman McCoy Singers Advertisement,” *Tucson Daily Citizen*, October 23, 1953, 28.

¹⁹¹ “Colgate Comedy Hour: Starring Eddie Cantor,” 2:21, 1952, last accessed March 18, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aP3hM3KsB6I>.

¹⁹² “Herman McCoy and Swing Choir on Eddie Cantor Show,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, January 17, 1952, B2.

¹⁹³ “Colgate Comedy Hour: Starring Eddie Cantor,” 2:21, 1952, last accessed March 18, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aP3hM3KsB6I>.

A year later, McCoy's Swing Choir would appear with Duke Ellington (for the first and last time, until the premiere of the *First Sacred Concert*) on a concert for Gene Norman in Pasadena, California, on the 30th of March, 1953.¹⁹⁴ Over the next decade, McCoy's choir would enjoy appearances on both the Ed Sullivan and Martin and Lewis Shows, and would record with Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra, Peggy Lee, and Billy Eckstein.¹⁹⁵ Other than these select recordings and performances, nothing of note is documented of Herman McCoy or the choir between the mid-'50s to early '60s.

In 1962, three years before the Herman McCoy Swing Choir would be booked as the choral accompaniment for Duke Ellington's *Sacred Concert* at Grace Cathedral, Herman—then known as “Harmony” McCoy—would accept the position of chef at the “Golden Door,” a popular, upscale health spa in Escondido, California. Here, he “achieved prominence as a leading dietary authority when he introduced a unique approach to cooking and brought joy to eating for those who lived in the spreading shadow of overweight. His special talent and well-disciplined technical skill applied to cooking resulted in tempting menus based on a healthful program of keeping down weight through proper dieting.”¹⁹⁶

In one of the brief mentions of Herman McCoy in Duke Ellington's autobiographical *Music is My Mistress*, McCoy is remembered more for his cooking than his conducting, arranging, or musicianship. Ellington reminisces about a time in his Beverly Hills penthouse apartment where he began living in 1959,

I was sort of hooked [on the apartment]. Strayhorn was hooked too, when he moved into the scene. He became the official cook, because we had a great big kitchen with lots of pots and pans. He would not allow anyone else to enter the kitchen, and he used to cook some great dishes. He even got himself a chef's hat. But there was one great meal he did not cook. When we returned from the studio one day, we found a gigantic pot sitting in front of the door. It was a real chef's

¹⁹⁴ Ken Vail, *Duke's Diary: 1950-1974*, 2:2 (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2002) 54.

¹⁹⁵ Harmony McCoy, *Harmony McCoy's Diet Cookbook*.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

cooking pot, about three feet tall. We took the top off and it was full of gumbo filé. We moved it inside and tasted on it. We invited people from miles around, and everybody was crazy about it. Herman McCoy, who was a chef, had brought it over, and left it when he found we were out.¹⁹⁷

The only other mention of McCoy in *Music is My Mistress* is in the context of having been an enormous help to the premiere of the *First Sacred Concert* and a few of the other early performance dates that followed.¹⁹⁸ The documentation of the *First Sacred Concert* pays as much attention to Herman McCoy and his Swing Choir as Ellington does in *Music is My Mistress*—that is, very little.

Interestingly, in addition to the few tracks that McCoy and his Swing Choir assembled throughout the 40s, 50s, and 60s, Herman McCoy self-produced and distributed an album. The album, titled “The Herman McCoy Singers Want You,” seems to have been a recruitment ploy. Though the LP omits a copyright date, the date of the pressing can be placed somewhere between late 1965, when the group had performed with Ellington to 1970, when he left Golden Door Health Spa for his last position at Murietta Health Springs Spa.¹⁹⁹ At this point, the group had lost its association with UCLA but remained, “a group of young men and women who love to sing for fun.”²⁰⁰ The singers were employed in various fields: “Sylvia Leftan, soprano, is an elementary school teacher; Phyllis Magaña is a bank teller in San Diego; Judi Miller, alto, is in Marine electronics in San Diego; Jack Madsen, tenor, a teacher and basketball coach...Pat Douglas, doubles as a tenor and baritone, operates Leon’s Hair Fashions in San Diego,” in addition to two other singers.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ Ellington, *Music is My Mistress*, 194.

¹⁹⁸ Ellington, *Music is My Mistress*, 194.

¹⁹⁹ “The Herman McCoy Singers Want You,” arranged and conducted by Herman McCoy, Namreh Records HLP-69.

²⁰⁰ “The Herman McCoy Singers Want You.”

²⁰¹ Ibid.

The album features twelve tracks on which the group is accompanied by a jazz combo (piano, bass, drums, guitar) and include Herman McCoy's arrangements of popular tunes like "The Trolley Song," "Bye, Bye Blackbird," "Sweet Georgia Brown," and "Blue Moon." The arrangements are each unique and are harmonically reminiscent of 1950s and '60s Doo-Wop; however, they are more choral in nature. In contrast to the solo vocalist and backup "Doo-Wop" singers, the group sings in choral homophony, delivering much of lyrics in unison.²⁰² The album must have been self-pressed and self-distributed because it lacks a legitimate commercial record label. Instead, the label is Namreh Records (Herman backwards).²⁰³

There is more to analyze regarding the topic of Herman McCoy's arrangements and their place in jazz history. While some documentation of jazz traditions in choral music appear in Eva Mae Pisciotto's Doctor of Musical Arts document, "The History of Jazz Choir in the United States," the name of Herman McCoy is never mentioned.

Herman McCoy passed away on November 19, 1996 having lived a life full of music and food. His accomplishments varied greatly from singing with Lionel Hampton to cooking for the Hollywood elite in health clubs and spas. His life was full of song and was summarized by the inscription on his self-produced album, "We sing for the fun and enjoyment there is in group singing and sincerely hope you derive as much fun and enjoyment listening as we did in singing."²⁰⁴

Duke Ellington and the Episcopal Church

Yet another lesser recognized element of Ellington's *Sacred Concerts*, as well as his spirituality in general, is their connection to the Episcopal Church. Since its inception

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

as an offshoot of the Anglican Church of England, there has been at least a wing of Episcopal Church that has been religiously and spiritually radical in its time in comparison to other Christian denominations. Ellington's deeply held belief that all people are created equal in the eyes of God and that one's talents, no matter how they are manifest, should be given unto God, are completely in line with progressive Episcopal doctrine.²⁰⁵

It is difficult to imagine where, or even when, the premieres of Ellington's trio of *Sacred Concerts* would have taken place without the Episcopal Church. Both the premieres of the *First* and *Second Sacred Concerts* were made possible by the commissioning, sponsorship, and support of the Episcopal Church and its clergy. Although the premiere of the *Third Sacred Concert* occurred at Westminster Abbey, where parishioners worship in the Anglican tradition, Anglicanism is the "denominational parent" of the Episcopal Church and its spiritual underpinnings and similarities with the Episcopal Church still exist even today.

Ellington's connection to the Episcopal Church and its people was enduring. One of the first documented instances of the long-lasting friendships that were forged between Ellington and the Grace Cathedral clergy during the creation of his *Sacred Concert* is a copy of Bishop James Pike's book *A Time for Christian Candor* that was signed and given to Ellington immediately following the premiere performance by the Bishop himself. Figure 8 shows Bishop Pike's inscription in his own book *A Time for Christian Candor*.

²⁰⁵ Catherine M. Prelinger, *Episcopal Women: Gender, Spirituality and Commitment in an American Mainline Denomination*, edited by Catherine M. Prelinger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) 346-47.

For Duke + Eric,

with much appreciation
and affection.

+ Jim

Figure 8. Inscription in Ellington's copy of Bishop Pike's book: *A Time for Christian Candor*. Used with permission from the Duke Ellington Estate, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Duke Ellington Collection.

9-16-65
San Francisco

An unforgettable evening!
C. Julian Bartlett

Glad we've met
Esther Pike

We did appreciate "IN THE BEGINNING"
John Gums ← YARYAN'S SON-IN-LAW + novice of CHURCH

A million thanks for the most exciting
evening we have had in America.

Magnificent and unforgettable!!
Arby Benez ← YARYAN'S DAUGHTER
All ours. ← ENGLISH FRIENDS

In the Beginning, God equals for us one dramatic
experience only once equalled.
Alan Evans.

A most impressive statement! May this
be one way the world may realize that "In
the beginning there was God" and once more,
now there is God. I hope we met again!
God bless and God-speed - Divia Bartlett
DAUGHTER →

Figure 9. The first half of the title page of A Time for Christian Candor. Used with permission from the Duke Ellington Estate, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Duke Ellington Collection.

A TIME FOR CHRISTIAN CANDOR

"In the beginning God ---"
and "God is love" — praise Him
all his people —

in Him

~~Ameyouant~~

HER — and we were there!

Sue Geryan

Indeed God has blessed you and
yours — what you have done
not only for us but for all —

Ⓢ PART OF THE PAIR!

Mizpah

Maryni Bartlett Ⓢ
(MRS. EJB)

Figure 10. The second half of the title page of A Time for Christian Candor. Used with permission from the Duke Ellington Estate, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Duke Ellington Collection.

The subsequent title page (figures 9 and 10) is signed by most of the important clergy of Grace and their families, including Dean C. Julian Bartlett congratulating Duke on “An unforgettable evening!” Bartlett’s daughter, Olivia, writes “a most impressive statement! May this be one way the world may realize that ‘in the beginning there was God’ and once more, now there is God. I hope we meet again!” Canon John Yaryan leaves the inscription, “In the beginning God, and God is love—Praise Him and all His people.” Both the wives of Yaryan and Bartlett are among the other signatories. Interestingly, notes and subtitles are provided by Ellington himself. Scrawled in Duke’s all-caps handwriting are notations denoting who is whose partner or daughter.²⁰⁶

Three months after the premiere of the *First Sacred Concert*, a letter from Dean Bartlett to Ellington testifies to the continuing friendship between the two men. Bartlett writes, “While I know I have had the opportunity to speak to you about this on the telephone, I have wanted for several weeks to get the chance to write and thank you for the marvelous present. The three bottles of ‘Something Special’ have me better stocked in good scotch than I have ever been before! It is so smooth as to be deceiving.”²⁰⁷

Canon John Yaryan and Ellington also remained friends after the *Sacred Concert* premiere and the two often exchanged phone calls and letters. One gift for Ellington, specifically a devotional letter and picture, are particularly poignant. The letter, addressed April 1, 1966, and notably during Lent, explains,

enclosed herewith you will find a copy of a painting that I had commissioned, depicting our Lord as He looked in life, not as He has been reproduced in stained glass or marble or oils. Mr. Brandon, the artist, is a devoted Christian and understood what should be painted—a typical “Eastern Mediterranean” type, and Arab, a Semite. It was this type of man that stood on Good Friday and accepted the sentence and carried the cross up Golgotha. It was this type of a man who hung from the cross for three hours and died. It was this kind of a man that arose

²⁰⁶ Signed copy *A Time for Christian Candor*, Duke Ellington Collection, 1903-1988, Archives Center National Museum of American History.

²⁰⁷ The Very Reverend C. Julian Bartlett to Dr. Edward K. Ellington, 6 December 1965, Duke Ellington Collection, 1903-1988, Archives Center National Museum of American History.

on Easter and through this, just for our acceptance, our own Eternal Life with God and our beloved in Him.

Mr. Brandon caught, as did Dr. Ellington, much of the depth of worship and understanding. In the background is the Wailing Wall of Jerusalem. The figure of Jesus is holding the “cup of comfort”, which is used by His people to share joy and sorrow, gloom and glory. He is wearing a prayer cap and shawl and reaches out to us, for He came for us.²⁰⁸

The letter continues with the same amount of intimate spiritual prose and includes a photograph of the painting of an olive-skinned Jesus that might have been especially welcome to Ellington.

Later the same year, Ellington and his orchestra appeared at Trinity Cathedral where he would meet yet another Episcopal clergyman who would have a great influence on his late life and career. As already recounted in the chapter 4, Canon Harold Weicker was instrumental in the evolution and production of the *Second Sacred Concert* at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in New York City.

In *Music is My Mistress*, Ellington names five Episcopal clergy who gave his *Sacred Concerts* the most encouragement, including “Bishop Horace W. B. Donegan, Canon Edward N. West, Canon Harold Weicker, the Reverend John S. Yaryan, and Dean Bartlett.”²⁰⁹ Ellington continues by describing the actual participation of the clergy in the creation of some of the musical numbers within the *Sacred Concerts*: “It was Father Yaryan who suggested that we use ‘Father Forgive,’²¹⁰ as in Coventry Cathedral, and we have put it into the middle of a song called, ‘Don’t Get Down on Your Knees to Pray Until You Have Forgiven Everyone.’”²¹¹ One last contribution to a *Sacred Concert* text comes

²⁰⁸ The Reverend John S. Yaryan to Dr. and Mrs. Edward K. Ellington, 13 April 1966, Duke Ellington Collection, 1903-1988, Archives Center National Museum of American History.

²⁰⁹ Ellington, *Music is my Mistress*, 266.

²¹⁰ The words “Father, Forgive” were inscribed on ruins of the altar of Coventry Cathedral after it was bombed in 1940. These words are now used as the response to the “Coventry Litany of Reconciliation”; “About Us,” Coventry Cathedral website, accessed April 3, 2017, <http://www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/wpsite/our-reconciliation-ministry/>.

²¹¹ Ibid.

from Dean Bartlett of Grace Cathedral. In correspondence leading up to the second performance of the *First Sacred Concert* at New York's Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, Dean Bartlett writes to Duke on December 6th, 1965, "I hope the work on the New York concert is proceeding as you want it to. Did you discard my feeble effort at the carol? I shall not be surprised at all if I hear that you did."²¹² Twenty days later, Ellington would premiere "A Christmas Surprise." Ellington writes the following about the song's premiere in *Music is My Mistress* during the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian concert, "This was the occasion, too, when Lena Horne sang 'A Christmas Surprise' with Billy Strayhorn at the piano. The lyrics were by Dean Bartlett."²¹³

Ellington's connection to specific clergy of the Episcopal Church is irrefutable. From the planning of the *First Sacred Concert* to his death in 1974, Ellington was in constant contact with these men and their Episcopal viewpoints and spirituality.

Forward Day by Day

Perhaps the single most important influence of the Episcopal Church on Duke Ellington's *Sacred Concerts* was a quarterly publication, *Forward Day by Day*, distributed by an Episcopal ministry called Forward Movement. Forward Movement grew out of the rejection of "a weary and divided Episcopal Church" in late 1934.²¹⁴ With the charge to "reinvigorate the life of the church and to rehabilitate its general, diocesan, and parochial work," the Forward Movement Commission—comprising five bishops, five

²¹² The Very Reverend C. Julian Bartlett to Dr. Edward K. Ellington, 6 December 1965, Duke Ellington Collection, 1903-1988, Archives Center National Museum of American History.

²¹³ The Very Reverend C. Julian Bartlett to Dr. Edward K. Ellington, 6 December 1965

²¹⁴ "How a Weary and Divided Episcopal Church Gets Reinvigorated," Forward Movement website last accessed 18th March, 2017, <http://www.forwardmovement.org/Pages/Item/3160/Part1-Our-Story.aspx>.

priests, and ten laypeople—began the journey to become a successful publisher of devotional and spiritual material.

On its first meeting on December 5, 1934, the Forward Movement Commission generated a “four-fold plan to reinvigorate the life of the church” and featured the following statutes:

First, appeal to the whole church to renew their discipleship along definite lines. Meetings and conferences on discipleship were to be held throughout the nation, led when possible by members of the Forward Movement Commission.

Second, publish a devotional manual on discipleship for Lent of 1935 to unite the church in Bible reading and prayer.

Third, use every possible means to restore confidence and loyalty to the church’s national leadership.

Fourth, appoint associate members of the Forward Movement Commission to carry out its work throughout the church.²¹⁵

The second statute, to “publish a devotional manual,” quickly became Forward Movement’s most important spiritual tool. The first publication, a Lenten manual entitled, simply, *Discipleship*, was a template for publications to come. The “clear, concise, and accessible language” that was employed in “Discipleship,” became “one of the hallmarks of Forward Movement.”²¹⁶ Unlike other church publications of the time, the manual spoke to the every-day man and woman unlike other church publications at the time.

Word of the new, spirited publication spread quickly and Forward Movement received over 672,000 orders of “Discipleship” to be filled in two months. The “nightmarish” task was accomplished by volunteers, and by the fall of the same year, Forward Movement was already on to its fourth publication, *Forward Day by Day*. Now

²¹⁵ “First Forward Movement Publication Sets the Standard,” Forward Movement website last accessed 18th March, 2017, <http://www.forwardmovement.org/Pages/Item/3161/Part2-Our-Story.aspx>

²¹⁶ Ibid.

a quarterly publication, *Forward* was first issued six times a year. “With a devotion for each day of the year based on the Daily Office Lectionary in *The Book of Common Prayer*, and now the Revised Common Lectionary on Sundays, ‘Forward Day by Day’ has been a resource for Christian disciples, Episcopalians and others, for eight decades.”²¹⁷

Ethel Rich, for whom Ellington prepared a score of background music for a production of T. S. Eliot’s *Murder in the Cathedral* at Milton College in Wisconsin, was the person who introduced Ellington to the publication that would become essential to his Christian and spiritual journey. Ellington’s writings do not document exactly when the two met, but it likely happened when he was in Madison for a concert at a University of Wisconsin fraternity prom in May of 1953. Mrs. Rich was instrumental in Ellington’s receiving an honorary Doctorate in Humanities and because she “seemed to sense Ellington’s role in sacred music,” and would mail Ellington a copy of *Forward Day by Day* quarterly until his passing.²¹⁸ Ellington writes the following in *Music is my Mistress*, explaining the publication’s importance to his life and spirituality.

Ever since I saw the first copy, this little book has been my daily reading. It is very clear, easy to understand, written in the language of the ordinary man, and always says things I want to know. It is extremely instructive, and it has played a great part in the adjustment of my perspective on the approach to the relationship between God and the human being. So I am profoundly indebted to Mrs. Rich and the booklet she sends regularly four times a year.

Forward may, in fact, help me reach the point where I can feel convinced that I have seen the more eligible light of semantics I so desperately need to think in terms of writing music for a mass. One may be accustomed to speaking to people, but suddenly to attempt to speak, sing, and play directly to God—that puts one in an entirely new and different position!²¹⁹

²¹⁷ “The Beginnings of Forward Day by Day,” Forward Movement website last accessed 18th March, 2017, <http://www.forwardmovement.org/Pages/Item/3162/Part3-Our-Story.aspx>

²¹⁸ Ellington, *Music is my Mistress*, 282.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

After first meeting Mrs. Rich, and for the next twenty years, Ellington would receive a personalized, and sometimes inscribed, copy of *Forward Day by Day*.



Figure 11. Cover of "Advent 1969-Epiphany 1970" issue of *Forward Day by Day* on the back of which Ethel Rich inscribes, "perfect cover for you [Duke]." Used with permission from the Duke Ellington Estate, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Duke Ellington Collection.

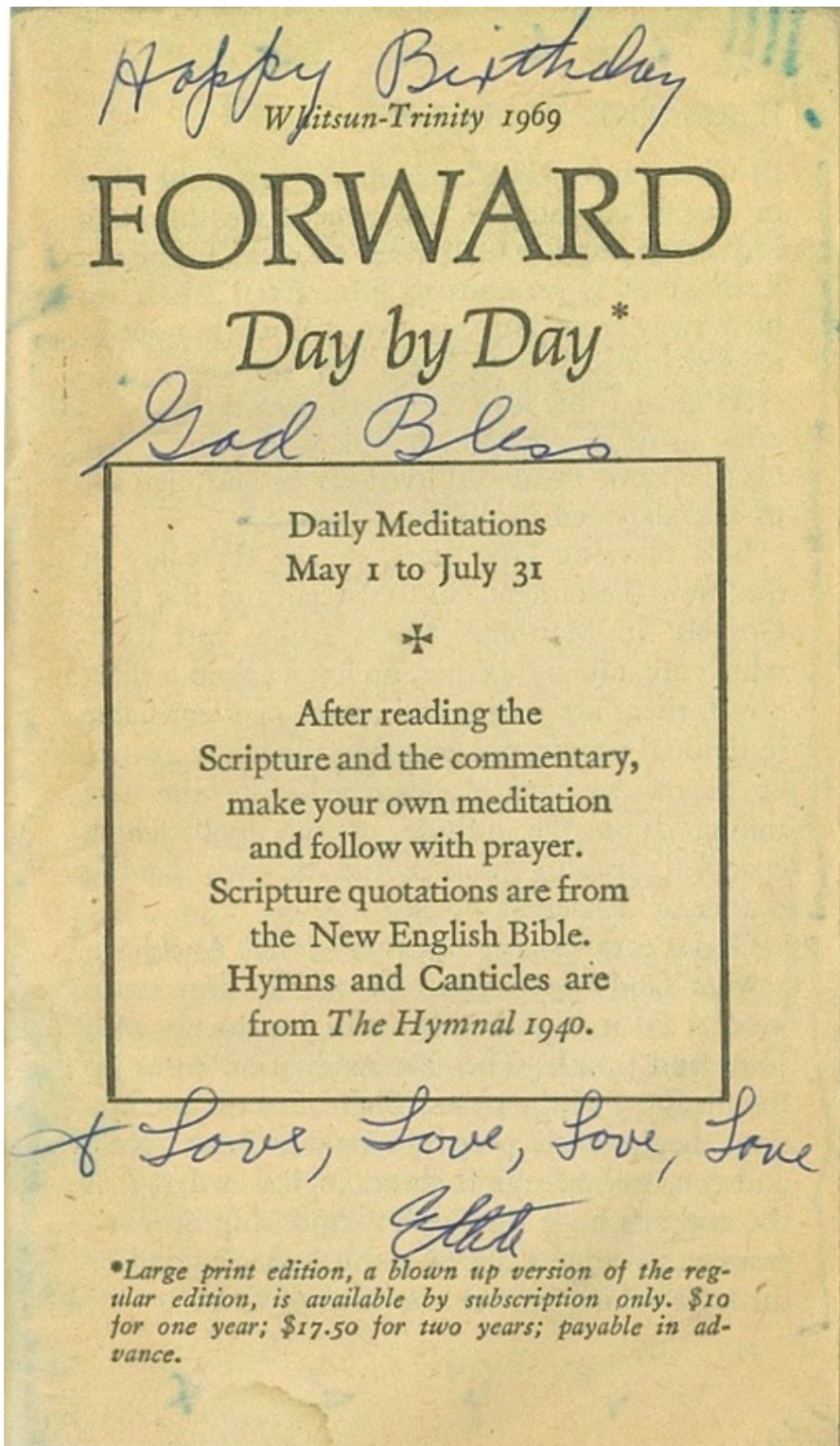


Figure 12. First page of "Whitsun-Trinity 1969" issue of *Forward Day by Day* wishing Duke a happy 70th birthday. Used with permission from the Duke Ellington Estate, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Duke Ellington Collection.

Of the close to one hundred booklets Ellington would have received from Ethel Rich, fifteen annotated copies are held in the National Museum of American History's Duke Ellington Collection. The collection has *Forward* issues spanning time from "Advent 1968" to "February – April 1973."²²⁰ The majority of the small booklets are heavily marked, most of the markings consisting of brackets or lines that span each page's paragraphs; four Xs on the top and bottom of each page; four hash marks on the top and bottom of each page; less often, underlined text; and more seldom yet, annotations.²²¹

²²⁰ Series 14, Religious Material, Duke Ellington Collection, 1903-1988, Archives Center National Museum of American History.

²²¹ Brent Hayes Edwards, "The Literary Ellington," *Representations*, vol. 77, no. 1 (Winter 2002), 23, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/rep.2002.77.1.1>.

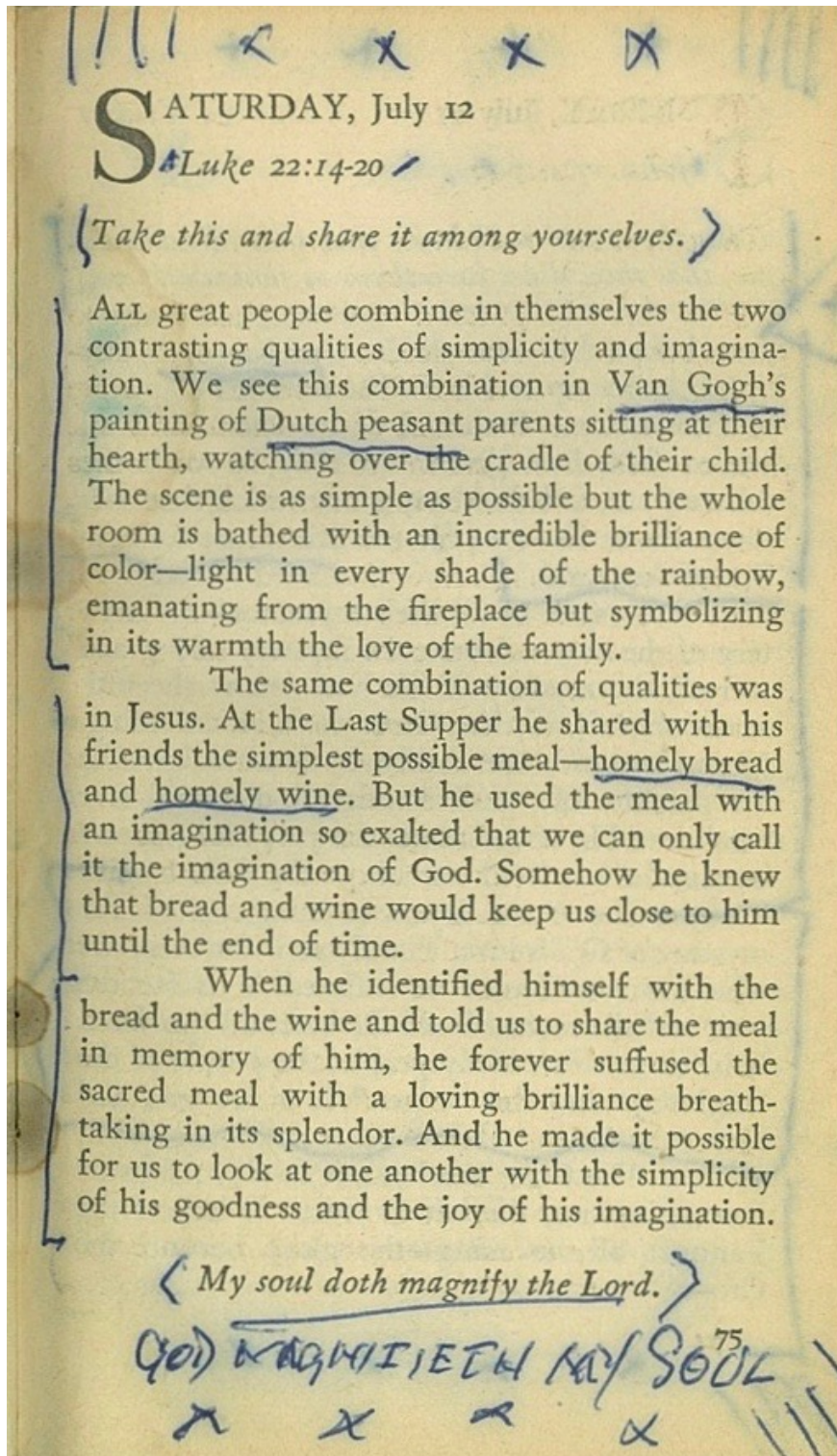


Figure 13. "Whitsun-Trinity, 1969," *Forward Day by Day*. A rare occurrence of Duke Ellington's writing in his personal copies of *Forward Day by Day*. Used with permission from the Duke Ellington Estate, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Duke Ellington Collection.

Duke's underlining offers a glimpse into his spirituality, and perhaps more broadly, into what he found important in his everyday life. In addition to being a prime example of Ellington's markings, Figure 13 also affords the opportunity to see both the mundane and extraordinary highlights—from underlining the topics of Van Gogh's Dutch peasant parents and homely bread and homely wine, to his ecstatic, “My soul doth magnify the Lord. GOD MAGNIFIETH MY SOUL.”²²²

Overall, Ellington's highlights and underlines can range from poignant realization of God's love and mercy such as, “Love never fails. Love never ends,”²²³ and, “no matter what men did God would never forsake them,”²²⁴ to themes of music, singing, and dance.²²⁵ These were themes of obvious importance to the great musician. Also important was God's high regard for talent in general, a thought Ellington had communicated in a letter printed in the *First Sacred Concert*: “no matter how highly skilled a drummer or saxophonist might be, that if this is the thing he does best, and he offers it sincerely from the heart in—or as accompaniment to—his worship, he will not be unacceptable because of lack of skill or of the instrument upon which he makes his demonstration, be it pipe or tomtom.”²²⁶

Other themes arise from Ellington's underlining and include, but are not limited to, the rejection of class and race and promotion of “interracial goodwill,”²²⁷ the grand nature of God, the eternal love and kindness of God, the ethereal God,²²⁸ and a God blind

²²² Ellington's personal copy of “Whitsun-Trinity, 1969,” *Forward Day by Day* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1969) Duke Ellington Collection, 1903-1988, Archives Center National Museum of American History; After this point, each *Forward Day by Day* issue will be referred to only by the issue title and date.

²²³ “Lent-Easter 1970,” March 30, 1970.

²²⁴ “August 1-October 31, 1972,” August 11, 1972

²²⁵ “August 1-October 31, 1972,” August 20, 1972.

²²⁶ “Grace Cathedral Presents a Concert of Sacred Music by Duke Ellington” Concert Program, 16 September 1965, Duke Ellington Collection, 1903-1988, Archives Center National Museum of American History

²²⁷ “Late Trinity 1969,” August 21, 1969.

²²⁸ “Advent 1968-Epiphany 1969,” November 25, 1969.

to gender and religion.²²⁹ The underlining also reveals Ellington's thoughts regarding the more mundane events of everyday life, as evidenced by the following highlighted words or phrases: "social events"; "anti-social";²³⁰ the "inescapable condition of life";²³¹ "creaturehood";²³² "Open conflict can be healthy and human, whereas repression of conflict can be unhealthy and destructive"; Being Christians doesn't mean we agree about everything but do everything in love";²³³ "The magic restorative power of sleep."²³⁴ He even enjoyed the puns like, "the bland leading the bland."²³⁵

Considering how important *Forward* was to Ellington's spirituality, its words informed much of his everyday life and led to a deeper understanding of a sometimes-inexplicable God. The comforting words found in *Forward* may have helped him come to terms with events from his own life: "At such moments our own emotions and sometimes even our own families must be secondary."²³⁶ Additional instances of underlined text in this same vein include:

"Fighting the darkness of suffering"

"Go, and sin no more"²³⁷

"repentance and forgiveness of sins"²³⁸

"Just a habit"²³⁹

"God forgives sins."²⁴⁰

"Not yield to temptation."

"Christianity is not anti-money or anti-this-world's-goods."²⁴¹

"deliver us from our lonely, selfish, guilty ways."²⁴²

²²⁹ "Late Trinity 1969," October 16, 1969.

²³⁰ "Advent 1968-Epiphany 1969," November 8, 1968.

²³¹ "Advent 1968-Epiphany 1969," November 24, 1968.

²³² "Advent 1968-Epiphany 1969," November 26, 1968.

²³³ "Advent 1968-Epiphany 1969," December 18, 1968.

²³⁴ "Advent 1969-Epiphany 1970," Prayers, 94, 1969-70.

²³⁵ "Advent 1968-Epiphany 1969," January 9, 1969.

²³⁶ "Whitsun-Trinity, 1969," June 5, 1969.

²³⁷ "Whitsun-Trinity, 1969," July 22, 1969.

²³⁸ "Whitsun-Trinity, 1969," July 23, 1969.

²³⁹ "Advent 1969-Epiphany 1970," November 21, 1969.

²⁴⁰ "Advent 1969-Epiphany 1970," December 15, 1970.

²⁴¹ "Lent-Easter 1970," February 28, 1970.

²⁴² "Lent-Easter 1970," March 27, 1970.

“No matter how worldly, irreligious, earth-bound, self-centered a person may be, he never ceases to be a spiritual being.”²⁴³
“Our own imperfect thoughts or vain opinions.”²⁴⁴
“Check on whatever perverts your mind, blurs your reason, dulls your conscience, obscures the right, makes spiritual things dull.”²⁴⁵

(Note that underlining is Duke Ellington’s own.)

In *Music is My Mistress*, Ellington admits to a link between *Forward* and the lyrics in “Freedom,” a number in the *Second Sacred Concert* writing, “many other suggestions [for lyrics to the *Sacred Concerts*] have come from the little book put out by the Episcopal Church called *Forward*. The pay-off statement in the selection, ‘Freedom,’ comes from it.”²⁴⁶ Though there is never any other mention of a direct link between a text from *Forward Day by Day* and lyrics, themes that he would have read and studied in *Forward* can be found in the texts of the sacred concerts.

The link between the people and teachings of the Episcopal Church and Duke Ellington’s *Sacred Concerts*—and more broadly, the last fifteen years of Ellington’s life—are undeniable. From the commissioning and inception of the *First Sacred Concert* at Grace Cathedral to his memorial service at St. John the Devine, Ellington’s life will be forever linked to the Episcopal Church. PERFECTION, one of his rare notations in *Forward Day by Day*, summarizes the comfort and heightened spirituality Duke Ellington felt when he studied the booklets:

The Gospel says: This is the way God loves us. He sends his rain on the just and the unjust alike. His is indiscriminate in his loving kindness and tender mercy. In Christ he accepts us, unacceptable as we are. As St. John put it, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” We are the recipients of a charity which cared for us to the uttermost, notwithstanding our faults and failures; by the grace of God we are to be like-minded toward our fallible neighbors.²⁴⁷

²⁴³ “Late Trinity, 1970,” August 19, 1970.

²⁴⁴ “Advent 1970-Epiphany 1971,” December 13, 1970.

²⁴⁵ “Advent 1970-Epiphany 1971,” January 26, 1971.

²⁴⁶ Ellington, *Music is My Mistress*, 266.

²⁴⁷ “Lent-Easter, 1970,” February 8, 1970.

Fifty Years Later

The catalyst for the retelling of this story was a poster that still hangs in Trinity Cathedral to this day (Figure 1), which sparked an Anniversary Celebration of Duke Ellington's original 1966 performances exactly 50 years later. That single weekend in Civil-Rights-Era Phoenix became a cultural event: In addition to the two *Sacred Concert* performances, Ellington led a master class for local music groups, performed at Star Theatre, and played his standards for a dance at Del Webb's TowneHouse. In homage to these events, the Phoenix Chorale—presenting organization of “A Celebration of Duke Ellington's Sacred Music”—sought to create cultural events that encapsulated more than the simple revival of Ellington's music.

50th Anniversary Celebration

Planning for the celebratory events began in the spring of 2016. The Chorale realized that it was essential to have strong community partners to promote and champion the events that were to take place the following November. These presenting partners included Trinity Cathedral; local jazz venue and nonprofit The Nash; the Mesa Community College Performing Arts Jazz Ensemble (MPJE), a big band comprising some of Phoenix's talented jazz musicians led by two-time Emmy-winning pianist Nick Manson; Arizona State University professor Christopher Wells, PhD, Managing Editor of the *Journal of Jazz Studies*; and Roosevelt Row, a creative district in the urban core of downtown Phoenix and home to Trinity Cathedral and The Nash.

Together with the presenting partners, the Phoenix Chorale hosted lectures on topics of Ellington's time at Trinity Cathedral; music and dance in his short films; performances of Ellington's secular music by the Will Goble Quartet, the Tucson Jazz Institute Ellington Band, and jazz pianist Charles Lewis; and finally, three performances

of “Duke Ellington’s Sacred Music,” two of which were performed in Trinity Cathedral. The jazz concerts, representing a genre not usually performed by the Phoenix Chorale, were met with enthusiasm from regular subscribers and new audience members alike.


PHOENIX *Chorale*
CHARLES BRUFFY *Artistic Director*
presents

50th
Anniversary



A Celebration of
DUKE ELLINGTON'S
Sacred Music

November 3 - 13, 2016

Figure 14. Cover of the 50th Anniversary Celebration of Duke Ellington's Sacred Music Program Cover. Compare the stained glass window to that on the cover of the original program on pg. 49. Both feature the Melczer Memorial Window, however, the original was just a sketch. This window is also a good example of the winged figure representing God above the waves.

The most cumbersome part of the planning process occurred while trying to find a suitable musical score. Instead of presenting the *First Sacred Concert* in its entirety, the Phoenix Chorale and MPJE relied on the Warner/Chappell Music Scandinavia AB edition of *Duke Ellington's Sacred Concert*, arranged by John Høybye and Peder Pedersen. The edition features music selections from each of Ellington's three *Sacred Concerts*. This edition was chosen for multiple reasons, including general availability and balance between the roles of choir and jazz band. Published, complete, and accurate scores to each of the three *Sacred Concerts* are still unavailable; although the Duke Ellington Collection at the NMAH holds a transcription of the *First Sacred Concert* by William Russo, the transcription has yet to be published.

Beyond this problem of inaccessibility, the Høybye/Pedersen arrangement was highly attractive given that “the choir and band are equals—perhaps with a slight emphasis on the choir.”²⁴⁸ For an organization that focuses on the presentation and performance of classical choral music, the emphasis on the choir in the Høybye/Pedersen version was essential to the final artistic product.

As stated earlier, the Høybye/Pedersen arrangement is a collection of songs from all three of Ellington's *Sacred Concerts*. However, as seen in Table 1, most of the selections are taken from Ellington's *Second Sacred Concert*. Additionally, it is apparent that the choir is an essential partner in the Høybye/Pedersen arrangement of *Duke Ellington's Sacred Concert*. One drawback of this arrangement, especially when compared with the other available Schirmer arrangements, is its lack of inclusion of Ellington's original work in the *First Sacred Concert*, “In the Beginning God.” As was explored earlier, this piece was one of the only original works on the *First Sacred*

²⁴⁸ “Duke Ellington Sacred Concert,” arranged by John Høybye and Pedersen, Warner/Chappell Music Scandinavia AB, 1997, 2.

Concert, and perhaps the most successful and recognized pieces of the three *Sacred Concerts* in general.²⁴⁹ Even without “In the Beginning God,” the Høybye/Pedersen arrangement highlights many of Ellington’s original compositions from the *Second Sacred Concert*. During the anniversary concert, the Chorale added an unaccompanied arrangement of Duke Ellington’s “Lord’s Prayer” to bring in one more musical number from the *First Sacred Concert* and the original Trinity Cathedral performances. Overall, the Høybye/Pedersen version captures Ellington’s spirituality and musical intent while creating equal opportunities for the band and the choir.

Table 1. Song list from the Høybye/Pedersen arrangement of “Duke Ellington's Sacred Concert.” This table lists the songs in order, from which the Sacred Concert the song is taken, and the orchestration of the arrangement of the song.

Set-list Høybye/Pedersen version	Sacred Concert	Høybye/Pedersen Orchestration
1. Praise God	Second	Choir and Band
2. Heaven	Second	Soprano Solo, Choir, and Band
3. Freedom-suite	Second	
a. To be contended	“	Choir and Band
b. Freedom	“	Choir, Alto sax, and Rhythm Section
c. Word you heard	“	Choir and Band
d. Freedom is a word	“	Choir and Recitation
e. Sweet, fat and that	“	Choir and Rhythm Section
f. Freedom—Svoboda	“	Choir recitation
g. To be contended	“	Choir and Band
4. The Shepherd	Second	Band, Choir tacet
5. The Majesty of God	Third	Soprano solo, Choir, and Band
6. Come Sunday	First	Soprano solo and Choir
7. David danced before the Lord	First	Tap Dancer or Percussion solo, Choir and Band
8. Almighty God	Second	Choir and Band
9. T.G.T.T.	Second	Soprano solo and Piano
10. Praise God and Dance – Finale	Second	Soprano solo, Choir, and Band

²⁴⁹ Teachout, 329.

The success of the Phoenix Chorale's 50th Anniversary concert only echoes the importance of creating partnerships and historical relevance through music. Although Trinity Cathedral quickly returned to its more normal sounds of Howells and Stainer, Canon Dugan believes that Duke Ellington's music still lives on in the astonishing stained glass windows that color the walls of the Cathedral to this day.

The windows were designed and conceived collaboratively by Dean Elmer B. Usher and artist Glidden Parker, both of whom sought to, "express in visual terms of color and light certain theological ideas and precepts" that Dean Usher provided.²⁵⁰ Glidden Parker, founder of Gliddenware, was Chief Designer for GlassArt Studios—a small stained glass firm that was based in Scottsdale, Arizona.²⁵¹ Along with expressing Dean Usher's theology, Parker believed that stained glass had "kinetic symbolism," and "provided a way of expressing life, the quality of being alive."²⁵²

During our interview, Dugan became increasingly animated while recounting his theory about the origin of these windows, especially the Cathedral's Rose Window. The Rose Window (Figure 15), which was replaced after a large fire engulfed much of the north end of the Cathedral in 2002, depicted Dean Usher's interpretation of creation. The golden wings form a triangle at the center of the window, representing the Trinity; these wings are replicated in the other fourteen windows throughout the Cathedral nave. God, three-in-one, hovers over creation—a glowing, yellow beam at the bottom of the window—"In the Beginning God" in glass, color, and light. It is not known for certain if Duke Ellington's "In the Beginning God" had a direct influence on Usher's desire to

²⁵⁰ Joseph Colville Lincoln, *The Windows of Trinity Cathedral* (Flagstaff: Northland Press, 1973), 47.

²⁵¹ Joseph Colville Lincoln, *The Windows of Trinity Cathedral*, 41; Sonja Haller, "Fight to save skylight in Scottsdale building," *Arizona Republic*, May 8, 2014, accessed March 20, 2017, <http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/scottsdale/2014/05/08/scottsdale-glidden-parker-skylight/8864155/>.

²⁵² Lincoln, 48.

portray the creation in the Rose Window, although Dugan suspects the Dean was so impressed with Ellington's composition that it must have had an influence. After all, Dean Usher had just received a copy of Ellington's *First Sacred Concert* from Canon Harold Weicker in early 1966 when Dean Usher was designing the windows.²⁵³ The Rose Window that now adorns the altar area (Figure 16), designed by Vada Roseberry, shares the same story of Creation and "In the Beginning God" as the window designed by Parker and Usher.



Figure 15. The original Rose Window designed by Glidden Parker and Dean Elmer B. Usher, installed in 1967. Used with permission from Trinity Cathedral, Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Libraries.

²⁵³ Ray Dugan interview conducted by Ryan Downey on September 12, 2016.



Figure 16. The Rose Window that is now in Trinity Cathedral, designed by Veda Roseberry. Photograph by Ryan Downey with permission from Trinity Cathedral.

Further Research

Because Duke Ellington is one of the most researched American jazz musicians and composers, one might think there is little left to uncover about the man, his music and its influence on the American musical landscape, and his life; but after delving into Duke Ellington's his spirituality and exploration of the intersection of jazz and church,

there is still much to discover. First, further research into Ellington's spirituality and its presence and evolution throughout his life may lead to new insights. Although Janna Tull Steed and Harvey G. Cohen both delve into the subject of Ellington's spirituality, there remain many details to reveal, especially regarding *Forward Day by Day*. Although this document revealed preliminary information about Ellington's connection to the publication, an interesting approach would be to analyze the texts of *Forward Day by Day* against the texts of the three *Sacred Concerts*. Ellington only admits to the publication's influence on one movement, "Freedom," of the *Second Sacred Concert*; but if he were reading *Forward* daily for almost twenty years, as is evinced by the Ellington Collection records, there may be more influence on the *Sacred Concerts* than previously acknowledged. Archival copies of *Forward Day by Day* currently exist only in archival form. As soon as the publication is digitized, it would make text analysis simple and revealing.

Other areas of research around Duke Ellington should include art, poetry, and music inspired by, written for, or dedicated to the composer from all over the world; these works are housed in the Duke Ellington Collection, but remain unexamined for academic purposes. Many of the *First Sacred Concert* performances featured at least one song written by the organist or chorus master at the host church (i.e. "Purvis a la Jazz Hot" from the Grace Cathedral concert and "Praise Ye the Lord" from the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian concert). From Trinity Cathedral remain only instrumental parts of the song that the cathedral's organist and chorus master, William Fairfield Brown, wrote for Duke Ellington.

Continued research into Herman McCoy and his Swing Choir would also produce interesting information, especially as would be relevant to the world of choral music. With the ever-increasing interest in small ensemble singing—and particularly

unaccompanied singing—throughout the United States, a small vocal group could certainly bring McCoy’s lost arrangements back to life.

The history of the Diocese of Arizona and Trinity Cathedral is relatively untapped, even though the Episcopal Church in Arizona was home for many famous regional politicians, businessmen, and musicians. Additionally, beyond the few controversies discussed earlier, Trinity and the Diocese of Arizona witnessed many other interesting events; for example, the Diocese of Arizona was the first in the U. S. to ordain a woman deacon, Kathleen Ryan.²⁵⁴ For a building and community as historic as Trinity’s, its history remains relatively untold. There are a few historic publications from the mid-1900s that retell the Cathedral’s early history, although they function as biographies rather than direct accounts of the Cathedral itself. With Trinity’s Centennial celebration quickly approaching, I hope to help with documenting some of the Cathedral’s history.

Another indispensable area of research would be the rich history of jazz and blues music in the Phoenix Metropolitan area. During our interview, Charles Lewis provided a plethora of names of local Phoenix jazz and blues musicians, the majority of whom are still living. It is essential to gather the stories of these musicians before they are lost. Lewis also provided a brief timeline of jazz’s unique dissemination into Phoenix’s community colleges and Arizona State University. Tracing this history alongside Phoenix’s significant jazz musicians is essential to preserving the history of jazz and blues in America.

²⁵⁴ “First Woman Ordained Deacon In Episcopal Church,” *Tucson Daily Citizen*, December 7, 1970, 23.

Final Thoughts

The research in this document cemented the idea that firsthand oral history research is essential to keeping stories like Ellington's concert at Trinity alive. Had it not been for this paper, the story of one of Ellington's late-life clergy friends, and specifically his friendship with Harold Weicker, would have disappeared forever. The detail with which Harold Weicker told his story about the *Sacred Concerts* and his friendship with Ellington, only months before his death, proved crucial to the story of Trinity Cathedral and the memory of Ellington's friendship.

Rather than homing in on a single topic throughout this work—say, the evolution of jazz in the 1960s, the history of jazz in the Southwest and Arizona, or the life and times of Duke Ellington—I have sought to bring together the distinct spheres of church, jazz, artist, and locale in a politically and socially charged moment in recent history. Taken together, this work has underscored the importance of one man's appearance to a community by spawning music, fostering friendships, exploring race relations, and integrating jazz into religious milieus. The story that unraveled from a single poster illuminated events like *The Letter* from Trinity's Vestry in 1964, the calls of heresy from fourteen Arizona clergy, racial integration in Phoenix, and Duke Ellington's connections to the Episcopal Church. Every community has a plethora of stories to tell—stories that still remain unheard; it is my hope that one concert poster has served as a catalyst to retell those stories half a century later.

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APPENDIX A
PATRONS TABLE

Short Biographies of Select Patrons from the original Trinity Cathedral *Concert of Sacred Music* “Patrons” list.

Arizona Flower Shop	Arizona Flower Shop is still in business today. Located on 18th Street and McDowell in Phoenix, the shop has been family owned and running since 1948. ²⁵⁵
John Armer Air-Conditioning Company	John Armer was the installer of the Trinity Cathedral air-conditioning system, installed in the late 1950s is still in operation today. His daughter, now an Episcopal deacon living in Globe, Arizona, remembers attending the concert and her story was meaningful to the completion of this document.
Mr. and Mrs. Neilson Brown	Neilson Brown, a state politician from Arizona’s southern-most county, Santa Cruz, and resident of Nogales, Arizona, had served on Arizona’s House Appropriations Committee of the state legislature, ²⁵⁶ and was President of a statewide insurance company called Selective Insurance by the time of the Duke Ellington concert. ²⁵⁷
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Galbraith	The local Phoenix businessman and millionaire is remembered for his assistance in the preservation of several of Phoenix’s most precious natural landmarks and art. Over his lifetime, Galbraith, along with Barry Goldwater, helped preserve the top portions of both Camelback and South Mountains, and donated over 200 paintings to the Heard Museum in Phoenix. ²⁵⁸
Glassart Studio	One of the major stained glass studios in America, Glassart Studio, opened in the mid 1950s and was located in Scottsdale, Arizona. Glidden Parker, chief designer for Glassart was the artist who helped conceptualize and design the stained glass windows that were installed in Trinity Cathedral from 1966-67. Glidden Parker also designed the two glass doors at the southern entrance of the Cathedral. ²⁵⁹

²⁵⁵ “About Arizona Flower Shop,” accessed January 19, 2017,

<http://www.arizonafloreshopphoenix.com/store/about>.

²⁵⁶ James Cary, “Solon Asks Budgeting of All School Funds,” *Arizona Daily Star*, January 28, 1954

²⁵⁷ “Selective Insurance Company,” *Arizona Republic*, April 6, 1958, pg 10.

²⁵⁸ “Galbraith Spent Life Giving to Community,” *Arizona Republic*, Scottsdale Republic February 19, 2007, S6.

²⁵⁹ Joseph Colville Lincoln, *The Windows of Trinity Cathedral*, Northland Press, 1973.

Dr. Curtis O. Greenfield	“One of the Valley’s leading Negro educators,” ²⁶⁰ Dr. Curtis O. Greenfield, was Principal of Percy L. Julian School located in south Phoenix. Dr. Greenfield sought out education throughout his career, even flying to Los Angeles on Friday nights after a full week of school to attend a class on Educational Psychology at the University of Southern California. Dr. Greenfield fought for the rights of black teachers in Phoenix throughout his career. ²⁶¹
Senator and Mrs. Barry Goldwater	See <i>The Letter and Barry Goldwater</i> pp. 7-15
The Rt. Rev. and Mrs. Joseph M. Harte	The Right Reverend Joseph M. Harte was bishop of Arizona from 1964-1978. During his tenure as Bishop he was known for his kindness and generosity. He also butted heads with Dean Elmer Usher over issues at Trinity Cathedral.
Mr. and Mrs. Richard G. Kleindienst	Richard G. Kleindienst, a native Arizonan, was a major U.S. political figure and lawyer during much of the middle of the 1900s. He served on the Arizona State House of Representatives during the ‘50s and ‘60s, but was mostly known as President Nixon’s Attorney General in the Watergate era. “But even some of his critics credited him with pushing hard to recruit more black lawyers for the Justice Department, and Mr. Kleindienst made a point of sending his children to integrated public schools. He traced his concern for minorities to his childhood in Winslow, Ariz., which had many Mexican-Americans and Indians. As a child, he was cared for by a Navajo woman after his mother died, and he grew up fluent in Navajo.” ²⁶²

²⁶⁰ Don Dederer, “Coffee Break,” *Arizona Republic*, January 23, 1959.

²⁶¹ Harold R. Cousland, “Most Negro Teachers in 3 Districts,” *Arizona Republic*, December 1, 1965.

²⁶² David Stout, “Richard G. Kleindienst, Figure in Watergate Era, Dies at 76,” *New York Times*, February 4, 2000, accessed February 27, 2017.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2000/02/04/us/richard-g-kleindienst-figure-in-watergate-era-dies-at-76.html>

Lederman Music Co.	A music store that was started in Phoenix in the early 1940s by brothers Ben and Bernie Lederman. The music store sold instruments, classical and jazz records, and offered lessons to local musicians. Lederman Music also had a large musical instrument rental program for local high schools—even sponsoring a few entire sections like the Cortez High School all-Selmer Saxophone section. ²⁶³
Mr. and Mrs. John Pritzlaff	John and Mary Dell Pritzlaff were civically, politically, and ecumenically active. Elected to the Arizona House of Representatives in 1960, John “served four terms and became the first Republican to chair the Appropriations Committee.” He was later appointed as ambassador to Malta by President Nixon and was appointed to Sandra Day O’Connor’s Senate seat when she was appointed to the State Appellate Court. ²⁶⁴ Mary Dell served as President of the Phoenix Art Museum Board of Trustees. She also served on the Heard Museum Board of Trustees, The Phoenix Symphony Board and the Board of Visitors. ²⁶⁵
Read Mullan Ford Co.	A downtown Phoenix Ford dealership located on Central and Van Buren Streets. ²⁶⁶
Rosenzweig’s Jewelers	A lifelong friend of Barry Goldwater, Harry Rosenzweig ran Rosenzweig’s Jewelers, his family’s business. Harry was involved in politics and philanthropy throughout Phoenix and gave to organizations like the Phoenix Fine Arts Association, the Urban League, and the Boys Club of Phoenix. ²⁶⁷

²⁶³ Patricia Myers, “Larry Lederman tells how Young Sounds of Arizona Started,” *Young Sounds of Arizona website*, accessed February 15, 2017, <http://www.youngsounds.org>.

²⁶⁴ “Celebrating the Legacy of: John Charles Pritzlaff, Jr. 1925-2005 & Mary Dell Olin Pritzlaff 1929-2015.,” *A Celebration of Duke Ellington’s Sacred Music*, program booklet, November 3-13, 2016, 42.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Read Mullan has a Big Supply of Christmas Wagons,” *Arizona Republic*, December 11, 1959.

²⁶⁷ Gail Tabor, “Harry Rosenzweig, Philanthropist, Dies,” *Arizona Republic*, September 29, 1993.

Universal Memorial Center	The Universal Memorial Center was the mortuary owned and operated by local Phoenix civil rights leaders Lincoln and Eleanor Ragsdale. The Ragsdale began to use the name Universal Memorial Center in 1964 after they took Martin Luther King Jr.'s integrationist stance for their own business. They hired a Euro-American, Mexican American, and African American to serve their respective clients. The integrationist practices lead to the Universal Memorial Center's increased popularity and profitability. ²⁶⁸
Gov. Elect and Mrs. Jack Williams	John R. "Jack" Williams served as Mayor of Phoenix from 1956 to 1960 and Governor of Arizona from 1967 until 1975. A staunch conservative Republican, Williams "oversaw an expansion in state government that included the creations of Department of Personnel and the Department of Public Safety... enacted air pollution legislation, adopted a code of ethics for legislators, and increased education spending." ²⁶⁹

²⁶⁸ Matthew C. Whitaker, *Race Work*, 185.

²⁶⁹ "Governor John (Jack) R. Williams Papers 1941-1975 Finding Aide," Arizona State Library, Archives, and Public Records History and Archives Division, Arizona State Library.

APPENDIX B

TRANSCRIPTION OF THE PHONE INTERVIEW WITH HAROLD WEICKER,

OCTOBER 12, 2016

Ryan Downey (Q:)

Harold Weicker (A:)

Q: Can you hear me?

A: Hello.

Q: Harold?

A: Yes.

Q: Hi, this is Ryan. How are you doing?

A: Hi, Ryan.

Q: Do you have time to talk right now? Is this a good time?

A: Yeah, sure.

Q: Great. So I hope to keep this to about, you know, 25, 30 minutes. So if it gets a little too long, just let me know or if you don't feel like answering questions or anything, just let me know as well, if that's okay?

A: Sure.

Q: And is it okay if I record so I don't have to type everything out?

A: Yeah, sure.

Q: Great. Thank you. So can I ask when you first started attending Trinity?

A: Let's see. I came to Trinity at the end of 1965 or early '66.

Q: Okay. Is that like right around when Elmer Usher became dean?

A: Yeah, his nickname was Tip, T-I-P, as in Paul.

Q: Exactly. So, yeah, as I've been doing these interviews and doing a little research, he's been a big -- big part of all of, you know, those kind of late '60s, mid to late '60s at Trinity. What brought you to --

A: Tip was -- Tip was very progressive.

Q: Right. Right, that's kind of what I have -- I have heard from reading and learning about him. So what --

A: Well, Tip, before he became Dean, he was director of Mariner's Church Detroit and, oh gosh, he was head of the automobile worker's union Walter Reuther. Walter Reuther was his senior warden, you can imagine what Tip's background was like.

Q: Uh-huh. Exact -- in Detroit, you mean?

A: Yes. Mariner's Church. Well, a friend of mine, Tom Delt, Father Tom Delt and I were classmates at CDSP, the Seminar Episcopal Seminary in Berkley and Tom, I think he does still have a church in the Diocese of Arizona. He told me about this opening and this very interesting dean and invited me to come down.

Q: Okay.

A: So I did and I met with Tip and Tip met with the trustees of the cathedral and I was hired.

Q: Great. And so you probably -- well, maybe you didn't. Did you know much about the -- the make-up of the congregation at the time? You know, Dean Usher was progressive, but maybe not the congregation.

A: Well, this was -- yeah, and although there were -- there were definitely some progressive people in the congregation. They -- I mean, nobody walked out because of the Ellington concerts, I'll put it that way. The people who didn't want to come, didn't come.

Q: Right.

A: There were no big repercussions.

Q: Okay.

A: We also -- we also had Joe Harte's approval or -- or I won't say approval, but he -- he said, yes, we could use the cathedral for that. Joe was a terrific bishop, very nice guy.

Q: That's what I've heard from people so.

A: His wife, Alice, was -- his wife, Alice, was just a doll.

Q: So can I ask how you ended up coming -- was it in Berkley that you heard these Duke Ellington sacred concerts or the first one?

A: The first concert at Grace Cathedral was produced by a very dear clergyman friend of mine, Father John Yaryan, Y-A-R-Y-A-N, and it of course was a great hit. And so one day, I called John. I said, "Do you think Duke would be interested in coming down to Trinity?" He said, "I don't know, but I just spoke to him a couple of days ago and I know the hotel he's staying at," a hotel in LA. Because Duke was doing the -- what's that stadium, the musical stadium down there? Anyway, he was playing a gig down there and I didn't even know if he was still at the hotel. I remember calling and asking to speak to Duke Ellington, figuring that he probably blocked all calls or -- or was gone. And the switchboard operator very nicely said one moment, please. And the next thing I knew, I was talking to Duke. I told him I was good friends with the Yaryans and would he be willing to come down to Phoenix to do the same concert at the cathedral and he said, yes, he would. And so down he came with -- with the band and we -- we put on the concert.

Q: Yeah. So tell me about that weekend? I know there were some other events that happened with Duke Ellington that weekend. Do you remember much about those other events?

A: No, I think he left the next day. But what we did, and this is what created a strong friendship between Ellington and myself, I told him I had organized a little party for him after the concert. And he was very polite. He was always very polite, but I could see he was kind of wary and the idea of not, you know, going to a hotel and having a good night's sleep wasn't, you know, too happy for him until I told him that we were going to the Playboy Club at the top of Dell Webb's townhouse.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Which was one of the first high rise hotels in Phoenix at the time, and boy did he perk up. And so he went up to the Playboy Club and we had a wonderful time. We had about six people with us. John came down. John Yaryan came down from San Francisco and his wife Suzy. And we just had a wonderful time. And in the course of that party, Ellington asked me what did you think of the concert? And I thought about it, I realized this was a make it or break it move. I could either just become like everybody else and say oh, Duke, it's wonderful, it's wonderful. Or I could tell him what I really thought. So I told him what we thought and we took a gamble and what I really thought was that was, you know, a beautiful concert, but it was all music that he'd written before. And I -- I challenged him. I said would you be willing to write a sacred concert from scratch? And he looked at me and thought for a minute and he said, yes, I would, but you've got to promise me that you'll produce it. So I felt like a bigshot and so I said well, sure, no problem. Well, at that point in the game, the money had fallen out from the cathedral and Tip had to let a lot of us go. And I would up at a church in Connecticut and my palm diocese always had the diocese of New York, Bishop Horace Donegan, one of the last of the classic old-style bishops and I were

very good friends. Because I'd been a youngster in his Sunday school when I was about three or four years old. He told me that I was always getting into trouble. I think I probably was. I was always being marched into the director's office, you know, for -- for a talking to. But through the case, we came very close friends. And he had the big cathedral in New York City, St. John the Divine. It's the second largest church in the world, but it's longer than the Vatican, but the Vatican is wider and this huge cathedral. So I produced it along with Ellington's sister, Ruth, who was a wonderful woman, lovely woman. Smart as all get-out. And she and I put this thing on and we had about 6,000 people in -- in the cathedral. The fire marshal was going nuts. Can you hear me?

Q: Yeah, I can. I'm just -- I'm just taking in your story right now. It's a great story.

A: So at that point in the game, the sacred concert was definitely on the map. And, oh, I toured with Ellington for a short while around New Jersey and Connecticut doing sacred concerts. That's -- then I realized that, you know, I was a priest and I had to get on with it.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But we became such close friends that I -- I did Ellington's funeral at St. John the Divine and I did his internment. I wasn't in the New York area when his sister Ruth died, so I had no part of that. But his Christian name was Edward, Edward Kennedy Ellington. And I called him Edward. And he really, he was the light of my life.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So I was doing this before getting married after a divorce which had left me very unhappy. And Ellington called me one day in New York City. He had an apartment in New York because he used to play the Rainbow Grill on summer

afternoons and evenings in which he has to, you know, take it easy in his apartment. And the boys in the band also, you know, could be with their families. And it was just a nice gig and one day he called me in the afternoon and said, "Look, what are you doing?" And I said, "Well, for you, I'm doing nothing," you know. So he said, "Well, come on down to the apartment and go around with me, I've got a lot of errands I've got to run." So down I went and there was a big limo outside. And I got in with Edward and we went around store after store and had a wonderful time and chatting and stuff. But he could see I was very depressed as he was -- I -- I knew he wanted to tell me something and I was waiting for it, but nothing came. And finally we're back on the street outside his apartment, and he's in the process of getting out of the limo and he stops and he turns around, sticks his head through the door and says "Harold, let me tell you something, you're probably not going to accept it now, but think on this and the day will come that you will." I said "sure, what is it?" And Ellington said, this is a quote, "You can never lose someone who loves you" un-quote. And I said to him, "Edward, you know, she left me." And he said think about it. And I think it's one of the most beautiful things I've ever been told.

Q: Yeah.

A: It certainly has got the gospel very clearly.

Q: Uh-huh. Yeah, so that is -- that is pretty amazing. Would -- would you be able to kind of think back on that time, that first time at Trinity and maybe recount what the days were like leading up to it? Or, you know, who was instrumental in bringing Duke beside you?

A: Well, it was me basically through Ken and Yaryan, who's a candidate at the Grace Cathedral. And he -- John provided the introduction for me to call Ellington by -- by phone, actually.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And which I did. And -- and then John came down to enjoy the concert.

Q: And did Dean --

A: I'm sorry.

Q: Well, I was gonna ask is, so did Dean Usher really have anything to do with it or was he more just a -- did he just kind of sign off on the concert?

A: Well, he signed off, but he was very enthusiastic about it. That concert has been recorded at Grace Cathedral and Columbia Records had a 33 LP on it, which I was able to get. So Tip actually could hear the concert before it ever came to Phoenix. And he loved it. So I had him as a strong supporter and then as I say, Joe was -- well, he said sure. You know, Joe wasn't wild about it, but he didn't -- he wasn't negative. And he could have said very easily I don't want that in my cathedral and that would have ended that. But he didn't. And Tip and I went on to do some really interesting things. We did a war and peace workshop for the Youth of Phoenix, fill the cathedral. And I had a senator -- oh, gosh, who -- I don't -- I don't want to say Goldstein. What's his --

Q: Goldwater?

A: What's -- Goldwater, yes, that's exactly it. I had said to Goldwater, you know, on the side of war and I had the retired head of the American Council of Churches, who had retired in Phoenix aside at peace. And Barry, who's a hell of a nice guy and a great supporter -- a great supporter of the cathedral. He was not a trustee in the years that I was there, but he was very interested in the cathedral and had

supported it for a long time. Anyway, I, when I spoke to him on the phone to arrange this thing, he said you probably want me to be on the side of war. I said, well, basically yes. I said, well, I don't know if that's me. And he's like well, I don't think it is either, but would you -- would you play that role? And he did. He showed up in a, I think it was a Corvette, with radio antennas all over it. He was a big Ham radio fan. And that was a lot of fun too.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So once again, I produced it, but -- but Tip was very supportive.

Q: Yeah.

A: He and I got along like a house on fire. I know there's a lot of bad news that's attached to Tip. I think when the money left, he was very hurt and decided to use part of the endowment to redo the interior of the cathedral, which I didn't think looked too great. I was no longer at the cathedral, I just came down to visit my sister and we all then went down to the cathedral to -- to visit with John. And he had his son as the contractor. You've seen pictures of -- of what he did. It was all redone after he died or left back to its original state, I think. That's what I was told.

Q: Right. So while there was a -- there was a fire in 2001 that actually --

A: Right.

Q: -- burned down a lot of what he had done. And maybe it had even been taken out of there beforehand. But actually it's so funny because Trinity still has -- he put up these -- these funny rosewood columns in -- kind of by the altar area. And those -- those pillars are still in Trinity, just in a different room. But, you know, he did all of those stained-glass windows, which I think really make --

A: Yes.

- Q: A really, really special place in -- in Phoenix. You really can't find anything like that in the city.
- A: That's -- that's quite true. Tip really campaigned for those windows. And -- and the money came in. Yeah, you're right. That type of stained glass is very unusual and I think they survived the fire.
- Q: Yeah.
- A: Those -- those pieces of glass are set and dyed, not lead.
- Q: Right.
- A: And they came through. No, Tip was very good on that. He was very good in his progressive view of Christianity. You're right, the congregation at that time for the most part was more conservative than Tip and I think that's the reason why they left. I think it was the reason why he left -- they left in fact. And Tip -- Tip I think was deeply hurt. And he had lost his staff. He was down to one part time secretary for a while. I think -- I think that changed. And he just focused inwards on the cathedral as far as the -- the reconstruction. And he just so hunkered down in the cathedral.
- Q: So when -- when you were talking about the -- who came to these original -- who came to that Duke Ellington concert at Trinity in 1966? You said some of it was the Trinity public or the Trinity parishioners, but --
- A: A lot of it -- a lot of it was -- was -- a lot of it was just the people of Phoenix and Scottsdale area because it was -- it was advertised and people knew it was going to happen. So, in fact, the cathedral was so full, I asked Duke if he would do a second performance, which he did. The cathedral on the second performance was about, oh, I'd say three-quarters full.
- Q: Uh-huh.

A: So to that end, it was a success.

Q: Yeah, I think very much so. From what I can tell, you know, I've found -- I've found a lot of newspaper articles afterwards really kind of hailing the success of that concert. Do you know the names Lincoln and Eleanor Ragsdale?

A: So who -- it sounds familiar. I'm 82 years old now. Yeah. Well, tell me about them.

Q: Sure. They were some civil rights activists in Phoenix at the time. They were a black couple who are pretty well-known in Phoenix these days.

A: Yeah. That's the best --

Q: Go ahead.

A: No, I was gonna say when you told -- told me it was a black man, then I do recollect him.

Q: Yeah, they were -- they owned a place called Universal Memorial Center, which was a funeral home, which is on the original patron's list of -- of that Duke Ellington concert at Trinity. So I was wondering if you remember them being there or not?

A: Oh, I'm sure they were, but I don't have any specific recollection of that. They might have even been part of a group that I took to the Playboy Club. But I think that's where it may have resonated.

Q: Uh-huh. Yeah, do you remember --

A: You've got to realize, I'm looking back what, 50 years?

Q: Pretty much exactly. Yeah, that's why we we're looking -- that's why we're doing this concert actually is because there is in Trinity pillars an original poster from that 1966 concert. It was November 10th, 1966 when you produced this. It was a Thursday night. And it still hangs in Trinity and there is a professional choir

there now called the Phoenix Corral and it's a Grammy award-winning choir that is putting on these concerts or a version of these concerts pretty much to the day of the 50th anniversary in November.

A: Right.

Q: And so that's why I'm, you know, that's why I'm talking to people and it's also turning into, you know, I'm a -- I'm a local Phoenix kid and I am doing my Doctorate right now and I'm finishing up my schooling and I will be writing on this concert in particular and sacred concerts in general and also just kind of civil rights and Trinity and about Trinity for my dissertation.

A: Well, Tip was ahead of his time at -- at Trinity. The man was dead-on in his theology. He believed that we are all God's children and -- and as such, we all should be respected and, I mean, he -- he was -- he was a tough guy, Tip, actually. He -- if you didn't know him, you'd -- you'd think he was just kind of gruff, which he was. But -- but then -- but he had a -- a biding faith in people. And I think Walter Reuther taught him quite a bit at Mariner's Church. You know, Mr. Reuther was not one of these union heads who just pocket the money and, you know, or in the river somewhere. Mr. Reuther was a fine businessman and an Episcopalian Christian. He used to open up the church at about 6:00 in the morning. He opened the church because the sexton of the church told Tip when he was director that he was tired of having to be up so early just to let Mr. Reuther in. So since he was the senior warden anyway, Tip told him, look, why don't you open the church and turn on the heat, then the sexton doesn't have to lie about this. Reuther said sure. So he was in prayer and meditation for one hour in the -- in the -- in Mariner's Church and then Walter crossed the office or walked across the street to his office and started his day. This was quite unusual

for a very, you know, significant union leader. Now, he -- he -- he was active in union organization primarily because he too believed that everybody deserved a fair shake. So you can see where Tip got his training before he came to the cathedral. And I think when the cathedral called him, I don't think they knew who they were calling. His -- his success at Mariner's Church was what I think interested the trustees, that they're all good, and he'll be good for us, he'll grow this place. Well, but he did, but in a different way. Now, I understand that this is no longer a problem with you all. I've met your bishop twice. I used to do business with his father. His father -- his father, what's -- what's the bishop's name?

Q: Kirk Smith.

A: Yeah, Kirk Smith. His father, and I think his father's name was Richard, I'm not sure. Anyway, he was the -- the district director of the Methodist church, which is a pretty high-up position. And when I used to do things at the university there, I'd -- I'd do these things occasionally with Mr. Smith or Reverend Smith or whatever. So I knew Kirk's father quite well. So when I met him twice, I was very impressed and I certainly had the feeling that if anybody wanted to do something progressive in that cathedral, he'd go along with it and I guess he has.

Q: Yeah, it's -- it's very interesting to me. Trinity now, I think is known as one of the most progressive -- progressive churches around. We have a very --

A: Right.

Q: -- very high population of LGBT parishioners. We have a diverse population. We also have, you know, we have a Spanish service that happens on Sundays.

A: That's great.

Q: And so, yeah, it -- it's very interesting, you know, I -- I -- as I was doing this research, it seemed like Dean Usher, Tip, was really before his time and if he had only come about, you know, 20, 30 years later, it might have been a different end for him. And what, you know, it -- it's so interesting because a lot of the people that have -- that were part of the -- I don't know if I want to call it this, but the ousting of Tip are still around today.

A: Right.

Q: And I don't know -- you know, I don't know if they have these ideas of like wow, you know, were we just trying to delay the inevitable?

A: Right.

Q: Or, you know, it -- so it -- it's -- it is very interesting to me that maybe it's kind of what maybe the path that Tip set it on or just the Episcopal church in general has kind of become that beacon of acceptance in -- in the Christian world at least? So, yeah, I think it goes --

A: It's interesting to see -- well, needless to say, I was -- at Viet Nam, I lost my first job in the church. I was cured over at St. Clemens Berkley, California and the director there was an Australian wonder, very conservative. And when I would go on out and there were protesters around, I'd -- I'd greet them and, you know, chat with them. Tell them to keep up the good work. This didn't go over well with him. So one of the reasons why I was interested in the cathedral was Tom Delt, you know, spoke to me about it, was [unintelligible - 31:53]. And he and I were basically thinking on the same page. Now I'm 82 and I look back on it all and I figure, well, there are not too many of us still alive who lost jobs because they were, you know, trying to be human. People don't -- don't tend to think back to those days, the '60s and stuff. I had a very big youth group at the cathedral and

we used to go out on outings. The national church had advertised a bus that they had -- they -- they -- they created a bus to -- sort of a mobile chapel that was running around southern Arizona. And needless to say, it didn't work. It was too hot. So here they had this bus and it -- it -- it didn't have seats. It was, you know, it was meant for standing. So we got the national church to give it to the cathedral and we put in proper seating and, you know, safety belts and, you know, all of that good stuff. But and that bus took the youth group around to several places. And what I was doing with the parents, like altogether with the parents as a group was to just tell them, look, just listen to the music these kids are hearing. If you can understand the music that's motivating them and that it allows, you will understand where we're going to be in the next 10 years, maybe 20. And the results, songs like, you know, "The Times They Are a Changing," you know, "Blowing in the Wind," "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" You know, great, great songs. And even Pete Seeger. And I played some of that for the parents and they were amazed. You know, a wise person once said if you want to know what the next generation's gonna be, listen to the music now.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And I believe that, although I must say I'm not happy with where the next generation is going to be based on that music. But the stuff in those days was very lyrical and very memorable.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But the lyrics, the lyrics for all that stuff, were very clear.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So I would like to believe that those kids were, you know, in their late teens and some in their mid-teens. But you add 40 years to that and I like to believe that

those who stayed in Phoenix still come to the cathedral and hopefully they had their eyes opened up along the way.

Q: Yeah, I think that those are quite a few -- there are quite a few families that still attend. And eventually I'll get to talk to a lot of them but, yeah, it -- it -- it is very interested how many families are still at Trinity that were -- that were attending in the '60s, '70s and '80s. I just have a couple more questions. Do you remember anything about the music in general at Trinity? Was it important? Not important or anything?

A: Well, yes, I'm trying to remember who our organist was. He was an organist choir master.

Q: His name was William Fairfield Brown.

A: Is that his name? Anyway, I just -- I just remember him as being a nice guy. And the choir was very traditional. The liturgical music I think would be the same as you would hear at any -- any church that could afford an organist.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So I wish I could tell you that the music was progressive. They were -- it wasn't. But occasionally we'd have guests come in as soloists and I remember one woman, she looked like she was 18. And she had a guitar and she got up there and she sang a verse from -- what psalm was it now? Oh, gosh. Anyway, it was so moving. And if anybody had trouble with it, it was basically out of scripture. So, you know, we'd have people like that occasionally. And so the music did have a little, you know, just because when a soloist can do every now and then versus a choir, then you can say yes, they were there and they were important when they were there, but from, you know, from the impact of the choir, of the congregation,

I don't know. I would think that the music you usually hear is the music you eventually go with.

Q: Right.

A: But some of these -- some of these soloists were progressive.

Q: Right. And then do you -- do you remember who Herman McCoy was? Did you ever know Herman McCoy?

A: I might have. By memory when it comes to people and places is not so good right now.

Q: Yeah. So McCoy was Duke Ellington's choir master basically. He was the choir conductor --

A: Oh, yes.

Q: -- For the sacred choir.

A: Yeah. Yeah. Now I remember him. Well, Ellington kept a lot of people on the payroll that he liked or that he felt that if he took them off the payroll, they'd be in bad shape and McCoy was one of them. The -- when he heard the music of that first sacred concert, some of it was very difficult to sing. There was one part -- one piece in the concert called TGTT to title and this soprano from Sweden who was kind of a soloist in her own right, she -- she sang it. And there were no words. It was all vocalizing the whole thing.

Q: Yeah, and he -- he -- yeah, the choir that recorded that original Grace Cathedral concert was all white as I can tell, because they were all college kids from UCLA. Does that ring a bell?

A: No, but I -- I -- I do recall that there weren't too many black people around.

Q: Right. Well, great. I mean, this is --

A: And that wasn't because of -- that wasn't because of Tip.

Q: Right.

A: Tip, you know, had the trustees to deal with and they basically had the power. You know, Tip could operate within a certain range, but beyond that, he couldn't, especially when the money left.

Q: Sure.

A: You know.

Q: So I -- I mean, again, thank you so much for talking to me. If you have anything else you would like to say, I would be very willing to listen.

A: Do -- do yourself a favor. In your research, take a look at the trustees that were in place at that time. One was the president of the biggest bank down there. One was the governor of the state, Joe -- Joe Williams. I mean, General Fred Stoft (ph. sp.). I wish I could remember the other ones, but those guys were -- were very strong people and very successful people. They were just, you know, more conservative.

Q: Right.

A: And, you know, if you can't find them for that, I'd never knock anybody's spirituality because I'm just happy that they're tuning into God.

Q: Right.

A: So, you know, what can be bad in that? But this McCoy, well, I think he's been very surprised at his rehearsals. We only had, as I remember, two or three rehearsals.

Q: Yeah, that sounds about right. That's what Cannon Dugan said was that I think the -- the cathedral choir themselves had been rehearsing for a while, but once Herman McCoy got there, there was really no time and so I think they only had a couple rehearsals.

A: That's right.

Q: And then --

A: Yeah. Hello? I remember Mr. McCoy as being a very nice person. But I don't really remember anything more than that.

Q: Yeah. There hasn't actually been much written on him, which I'm trying to find out a little bit more just because I'm a singer and his choirs were pretty instrumental in all of these recordings. So I'm trying to find out a little bit more about him in particular for my research.

A: Sure.

Q: But honestly, there's not much written. I'm going in January to the Duke Ellington archives in Washington D.C., so I'm gonna try and pull some stuff out there, but I might not be able to find anything.

A: Well, you might call Steven Ellington, one of Duke's grandsons. You know, he took over his mother's apartment in New York City when she died several years ago.

Q: Okay.

A: I mean, he's either in the phone book. It's -- it was an address on Park Avenue where he was either in the phone book or the name of Ellington's company was Tempo Music.

Q: Okay.

A: And by the way, I hope in your concerts you're getting copyright fees after the Ellingtons.

Q: We are, yes.

A: That's great. That was the one thing that Edward always was a little insistent on. He -- he felt that he never made all that much money from -- from the band because they were expensive.

Q: Right.

A: But from what money he did make, he felt, you know, the people who didn't support him with their -- with his recordings, you know, just hadn't done him any favors.

Q: Right.

A: You know. But he didn't hold it against them. He, you know, he -- he -- if he thought something out, he'd always come out on the right side.

Q: Right.

A: But the outcome, check out that board of trustees at that time.

Q: I will.

A: And you'll see basically what the conservative side was of the basis of it.

Q: Right. That church had a lot of conservative unique leaders at the time. So I -- this is going to be off topic, but I -- I wanted to know if you know the last name Lasker or the name Albert Lasker?

A: Well, Mr. Lasker was a very famous man in the business. I think he was a producer, wasn't he?

Q: Yeah. I actually really don't know much about him. I -- one of the -- the gentlemen at Trinity who actually put me in contact with your sister copied me on some information that said Albert Lasker's business was actually in a -- in a building that you guys might have lived in or also have a business in or something and I just brought it up because Albert Lasker is my third great uncle, so.

A: That's interesting. I think he's -- I think he was a music producer and -- and recordings.

Q: Yeah, he might have been. So it was -- this is a funny connection, you know, how many people are -- are kind of related or cross paths.

A: The Lasker family were very prominent in New York City. And his sister, she decided one day that she wanted to landscape the medians, you know, in -- on Park Avenue.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: You know, starting at Grace Cathedral and going all the way up. And so those medians look awful. Before there were beautiful gardens and Mary Lasker --

Q: Sounds right.

A: So you must be very proud. That's a good family to come from.

Q: I -- I, you know, I wish I -- I had known them. Well, thank you so much for talking. I -- to use this interview as part of my dissertation, I have to get a signature from you. And I was wondering what the best way to get that paper is.

A: Well, if you mail it to me, my wife and I are going down to Mexico where we have a house.

Q: Okay.

A: On Saturday. So let me give you an address in Texas which brings our mail down.

Q: Okay.

A: You know, it would -- it would be Reverend Harold Weicker or Dr. Harold Weicker, whatever you want or Harold Weicker.

Q: Okay.

A: Okay. Laredo, Texas.

Q: Great.

A: L -- let's see L-A-R-E, D, as in David, O.

Q: Yep.

A: Texas and the zip is 78043.

Q: Perfect. And then what's the easiest --

A: Well, good luck on your research -- the -- the -- the treasure trove of information is -- is his -- is his grandson. If you can get through to him -- well, all you have to do is Google tempo music because as I remember, they used to keep their office, you know, in that apartment.

Q: You said his name was Steven?

A: Yeah.

Q: Great.

A: And there's another brother also. I forget the other brother's name. But, yeah, no, they -- they were Duke Ellington's grandchildren and as such, they were Ellington, Duke Ellington's grandchildren.

Q: Great.

A: And they really considered them family.

Q: Yeah. Well, I would -- I have a picture of Tip and Duke Ellington. Have you seen that picture before?

A: Oh, I probably did 40 years ago with Doug.

Q: Well, if you would like a copy of it, I'd be happy to send you one. Would you like one?

A: Oh, sure. That'd be great.

Q: Okay. I'll send it with the -- with the -- the paper I'm mailing you.

A: Now, are you the organist as well as the choir master?

Q: I'm not the organist. I'm just a -- I'm one of the soloists in the choir.

A: Ryan?

Q: Yep.

A: Well, good for you.

Q: Thank you.

A: I can remember growing up in World War II in a church that JP Morgan built outside of his home in Long Island and my mother -- my father wasn't a big church person. And I -- oh, gosh, what was I talking about? What was I just talking about?

Q: About a church in Long Island.

A: Yeah. But why does it come to mind, I wonder?

Q: Well --

A: I know. It was they had a choir of one and it was a baritone and a big baritone and boy, he could belt it out. And -- and it totally supported the congregation's singing.

Q: That's great.

A: In fact, I think -- I think it even inspired them to -- to reach his standard and he was a man well into his 60s.

Q: Well, that's -- that's great. I -- I can't wait to keep on digging into this -- this story and I thank you so much for talking to me. I'll talk to your sister.

A: When do you graduate?

Q: Hopefully in May. We'll -- we'll see. My fingers are crossed.

A: Good. You're just starting your dissertation now?

Q: Well, I changed my topic. This -- this concert really got me going. So I think I'll have plenty of time. I have a lot of research already done.

A: Nice. Well, good for you.

Q: Thank you so much. And I'll -- I'll make sure to let you know when it's done and send you a copy.

A: Yeah.

Q: A lot of the stories you have just told will make it in there. So thank you so much.

A: Well, you can put Doctor in front of your name.

Q: Right. Right. Exactly.

A: And -- and -- and get more respect.

Q: Right. That's all I'm going for these days.

A: Right. Well, thank you, Ryan. I appreciate it.

Q: Yeah, and thank you, Harold. We'll talk soon. Thank you.

A: Great. Bye-bye.

Q: Bye.

[End of Recording]

Transcribed by Jennifer Ferris, Kelsey Transcripts

APPENDIX C
COPYRIGHT AND USAGE AGREEMENTS



TRINITY CATHEDRAL

The Cathedral of the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona

The Right Reverend Kirk Stevan Smith, PhD, Fifth Bishop of Arizona

The Verv Reverend Troy Mendez, Dean

March 16, 2017

Ryan Downey
2318 W. Lompoc Cr.
Mesa, AZ 85202

Dear Ryan:

Let this letter serves as our permission for use of the materials you have selected. This permission is issued solely for publication in the culminating document you've described. Requests for further duplication or reuse of the materials contained within the Trinity Cathedral Records can be directed to Trinity Cathedral for additional permissions.

MSS 138 Box 6 Folder 7: The Ellington concert program, the "Income Study" memorandum and other document in the Ellington folder, and Duke Ellington Concert Poster.

MSS 138 Box 5 Folder 3: Select letters concerning Dean Elmer B. Usher, Bishop Harte, and Bishop Pike.

SPC 296: Vintage print of Duke Ellington and Dean Elmer B. Usher, and Original Rose Window Print.

Please cite the materials from the Trinity Cathedral Records, Arizona Collection, Arizona State University Library.

Sincerely,

The Very Rev. Troy Mendez
Dean, Trinity Cathedral

100 W Roosevelt Street | Phoenix | Arizona | 85003-1206
602.254.7126 *office* | 602.495.6612 *facsimile* | www.azcathedral.org

From: **Michael Vahala** mv@smzllp.com
Subject: RE: Ellington Item Rights
Date: March 20, 2017 at 2:23 PM
To: Ryan Downey rjdowne1@asu.edu



Hi Ryan,

As you know from our phone conversation, I work at Scarola Malone & Zubatov LLP, the law firm that represents the estates of Duke Ellington and his son Mercer Ellington.

The estates would have no problem with you using the pages listed below, in the manner you describe, in your dissertation.

As we have discussed, you should be in touch with any other potential copyright holders for permission for the uses you describe.

Best of luck with the dissertation!

Regards,

Mike Vahala

Michael Vahala
Office Manager
Scarola Malone & Zubatov LLP
1700 Broadway
41st Floor
New York, NY 10019
Telephone: (212) 757-0007 x 3235
Facsimile: (212) 757-0469
E-Mail: mv@smzllp.com

Michael Vahala
Office Manager
Scarola Malone & Zubatov LLP
1700 Broadway
41st Floor
New York, NY 10019
Telephone: (212) 757-0007 x 3235
Facsimile: (212) 757-0469
E-Mail: mv@smzllp.com

From: Ryan Downey [<mailto:rjdowne1@asu.edu>]
Sent: Thursday, March 09, 2017 1:17 PM
To: Michael Vahala
Subject: Ellington Item Rights

Hi Michael,

Thanks again for your prompt reply.

Here is a more detailed list of the items I would like to have permission to reproduce in mv

dissertation.

These pages will be used to highlight how Ellington annotated this publication and its influence on his Sacred Concerts. Additionally, they will highlight the relationship between Ellington, Ethel Rich, and the clergy of Grace Cathedral.

- *Forward Day by Day* pages:
 - Title page of Whitsun and Trinity 1969
 - Pg. 75 of Whitsun and Trinity 1969
 - Cover of Advent 1969 - Epiphany 1970
 - Inside cover of Advent 1969 - Epiphany 1970
- A Time for Christina Candor (less important)
 - First inscribed Page
 - two title pages

My dissertation is focusing on a particular concert that Ellington played at Trinity Cathedral in downtown Phoenix, Arizona, in 1966. During this concert, “Go, Labor On!” was premiered—a piece written for and dedicated to Duke Ellington by Trinity’s Organist and Chorus Master. The other piece is an arrangement that was also featured on the same concert.

Sheet Music found in Duke Ellington Collection:

- “Go, Labor On!”
 - By William Fairfield Brown
 - Ellington Collection does not have a full score, only instrumental parts
- “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”
 - By Herman McCoy

Let me know if you need any more detail in the descriptions. When I was at the National Museum of American History, I took pictures of what I wanted to use, so I can send the pictures if needed.

Thanks,

Ryan Downey

APPENDIX D
IRB CONSENT FORMS

Duke Ellington Interview Consent Form

Duke Ellington 50th Anniversary Sacred Concert Phoenix Audio/Video Interviews

I am a doctoral student under the direction of Carole FitzPatrick in the School of Music at Arizona State University. I am conducting interviews to create documentation of the lives and stories of people surrounding Duke Ellington's appearance at Trinity Cathedral in 1966.

The interviews will focus life in Phoenix during the 1960s, which means we will be asking questions regarding personal history and experiences as they relate to that time.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve an in-person interview that will last approximately 1.5 to 2 hours. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop participation at any time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty and your stories or interview will not be included in the final document.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation. Once again, if you do not feel comfortable with certain questions, please let me know and we will move on or will be able to stop the interview all together.

I will take both video and audio recordings of our interview, after which the digital files will be store on two encrypted hard drives to protect your confidentiality. Your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous if you would like. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used, if requested.

As mentioned, I would like to audio record or video record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact **Carole FitzPatrick** at 480-965-3383 or carole.fitzpatrick@asu.edu or **Ryan Downey** at 480-620-9227 or ryan.downey@asu.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study.

Initial one: _____ Name can be used once Name CAN NOT be used _____

By signing below, you are agreeing to be part of the study.

Name: ManRay Armer

Signature: ManRay Armer

Date: 12/16/2016

Duke Ellington Interview Consent Form

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Initial one: Name can be used CD Name CAN NOT be used _____

By signing below, you are agreeing to be part of the study.

Name: Charles Lewis

Signature: Charles Lewis

Date: Oct 29th 16

Duke Ellington Interview Consent Form

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Initial one: Name can be used KSZ Name CAN NOT be used _____

By signing below, you are agreeing to be part of the study.

Name: Kirk Stevan Smith

Signature: Kirk Stevan Smith

Date: 10/28/14

Duke Ellington Interview Consent Form

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Initial one: Name can be used Ryu Name CAN NOT be used _____

By signing below, you are agreeing to be part of the study.

Name:

RICHARD R. USHER

Signature:

Richard R. Usher

Date: 10/31/16

Duke Ellington Interview Consent Form

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Initial one: Name can be used X Name CAN NOT be used _____

By signing below, you are agreeing to be part of the study.

Name:

Harold Weicker

Signature:

X Harold Weicker

Date:

Nov. 14, 2016

Duke Ellington Interview Consent Form

Duke Ellington 50th Anniversary Sacred Concert Phoenix Audio/Video Interviews

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Initial one: Name can be used MCW Name CAN NOT be used _____

By signing below, you are agreeing to be part of the study.

Name:

Matthew C. Whitaker

Signature:

Matthew C. Whitaker

Date: 1-18-16