

VIC GIBBONS
45, All Saints Green,
Saint Ives,
Huntingdon,
CAMBS PE17 4YY
Telephone: (0480) 65695

CHRIS BARBER'S JAZZ & BLUES BAND
Spring tour details

Mail 1974

The Band interrupts its current European tour, travelling back to England to appear in concert on Wednesday April 28th at The Fairfield Hall, Croydon.

They return to Scandinavia until commencing their Spring/Summer tour of England at Ely on May 14th..

Falling into this period is the special 'Echoes Of Ellington' tour with special guests The Brooks Kerr Trio - featuring ex-Ellingtonians Russell Procope and Sonny Greer.

Full dates up to the end of the 'Echoes Of Ellington' tour as follows: (Echoes of Ellington dates in Capitals)

APRIL

Wed 28th Fairfield Hall; Croydon.

MAY

Fri 14th British Sugar Corporation; Lynn Road; Ely; Cambs.

Sat 15th Dancing Slipper; Nottingham.

Sun 16th Civic Theatre; Aylesbury; Bucks.

Mon 17th Leicester Jazz Society; County Hotel; Blaby; Nr. Leicester

Wed 19th

Thu 20th Royal Lancaster Hotel; London

Sat 22nd Warren Country Club; Bredbury; Nr. Stockport

SUN 23RD ASTRA CINEMA: LLANIDUDNO

MON 24TH 'JOLLEES': LONGTON: STOKE-ON-TRENT

WED 26TH EMPIRE THEATRE: LIVERPOOL

THU 27TH HI PRODROME: BIRMINGHAM

Fri 28th Campus West; Welwyn-Garden-City

SAT 29TH MELBOURN VILLAGE COLLEGE: NR CAMBRIDGE (SOLD OUT)

SUN 30TH CIVIC HALL: GUILDFORD

JUNE

THU 3RD ST. IVO CENTRE: ST. IVES: HUNTINGDON

FRI 4TH 100 CLUB: OXFORD STREET: LONDON W.1.

SAT 5TH 100 CLUB: OXFORD STREET: LONDON W.1.

SUN 6TH ESPLANADE THEATRE: BOGNOR REGIS (End of 'Echoes of Ellington' tour).

Further ahead, The Chris Barber Band have been booked to appear at the 'Grand Prix Night of the stars' at the Royal Albert Hall on July 13th and they will play at Brands Hatch on July 18th for the British Grand Prix crowd.

VIC GIBBONS
45, All Saints Green,
Saint Ives,
Huntingdon,
CAMBS PE17 4YY
Telephone: (0480) 65695

CHRIS BARBER TO TOUR WITH EX-ELLINGTON STARS

The Chris Barber Jazz & Blues Band are to feature in a special tour playing the music of the late Duke Ellington. Their special guests will be The Brooks Kerr Trio from America which features famous ex-Duke Ellington stars Russell Procope and Sonny Greer. The tour, entitled 'Echoes of Ellington', will take place in England during late May and early June. In addition to the new arrangements of Ellington music that pianist Brooks Kerr will be bringing over, Chris has commissioned British arranger Alan Cohen to provide new Ellington scores especially for the tour.

'Echoes of Ellington will be presented at

SEE ENCLOSED DATES

Chris Barber has included the works of Duke Ellington in his repertoire ever since forming his present Band in 1954. His recent album 'his 60th in all, entitled 'The Chris Barber Jubilee Tour' on Black Lion records, features a concert recording with another famous Ellingtonian - Ray Nance. These are probably the last recordings made by trumpeter/violinist Nance before his recent death.

Brooks Kerr is a great student of Ellington of whom the Duke himself once said " Ask Brooks Kerr...He's our encyclopaedia.."

Sonny Greer is the only remaining living member of the Duke's first orchestra formed in 1919 while Russell Procope was featured alto saxophonist in the Ellington band from 1945 until 1974.

with compliments

for further information contact

Vic Gibbons

at above address



ECHOES OF ELLINGTON

THE MUSIC
OF THE
GREAT

DUKE
ELLINGTON

PLAYED BY



CHRIS
BARBER'S
JAZZ
& BLUES
BAND

PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

THE BROOKS KERR TRIO

RUSSELL PROCOPE
AND SONNY GREER



FEATURING FAMOUS
EX- ELLINGTON STARS

TOUR DETAILS
OVERLEAF

- Sunday May 23rd **LLANDUDNO** Astra Cinema, Tickets: £2, £1.75p. Available from Vincent Wagstaff Ltd., 11 & 12 Vaughan Street, Llandudno. Tel. 76649.
- Monday May 24th **STOKE-ON-TRENT** "Jolleees", Commerce Street, Longton. Tickets: Members £1.10p, Others £1.50p. All enquiries, Tel. Stoke-on-Trent 321611.
- Wednesday May 26th **LIVERPOOL** Empire Theatre. Tickets: £1.75p, £1.50p, £1.25p, £1.00p from Theatre Box Office.
- Thursday May 27th **BIRMINGHAM** Hippodrome. Tickets: £1.75p, £1.50p, £1.25p, £1.00p from Theatre Box Office.
- Saturday May 29th **CAMBRIDGE** Melbourne Village College, Nr. Cambridge. SOLD OUT.
- Sunday May 30th **GUILDFORD** Civic Hall. Tickets: £2, £1.75p, £1.50p, £1.25p. Available from Army & Navy Stores, High Street, Guildford. Tel. 68171.
- Thursday June 3rd **ST. IVES (Cambs)**. St. Ivo Centre, St. Ives, Huntingdon. Tickets: £2, £1.50p from Box Office. Tel. 65695.
- Friday June 4th
Saturday June 5th **LONDON** 100 Club, 100 Oxford Street. Tickets: Members £1.75p, Guests £2.50p from Club Box Office. Tel. 01-636 0933.
- Sunday June 6th **BOGNOR REGIS** Esplanade Theatre. Tickets: £2, £1.50p, £1, from Theatre Box Office. Tel. 21902.

LEONARD FEATHER

A Career Dedicated to the Duke

In at least three respects, Brooks Kerr is not your conventional jazz musician.

Most of the great talents of jazz emerged from black and/or poor families. The father of pianist Brooks Kerr was head of Yale University Press, his mother a prominent and successful businesswoman. Both, as you might guess, wealthy and white.

Most young players are into jazz/rock, avant-garde or R&B. Kerr, who at 24 finds most of the new idioms repugnant, boasts of a lifelong dedication to the works of Duke Ellington and even studied informally with the Duke's own mentor, the late Willie (The Lion) Smith.

A heavy majority of musicians can claim the blessing of vision. Kerr is totally blind in the right eye and 10% sighted in the left.

He was 5 years old when he first met Duke Ellington, whom his parents, avid jazz fans and record collectors, knew personally. He began studying piano a couple of years later. After a decade of private tuition Kerr spent a year at Manhattan School of Music, but quit when the school demanded that he learn Braille. (His parents, now divorced, raised him as a sighted child and insisted he make the best possible use of what little sight he has.) He moved over to Juilliard and was immediately promoted to fourth-year studies.

Throughout all those years he built a phenomenal repertoire of Ellington's music, from the first tune Duke wrote ("Soda Fountain Rag," 1914) to the last. Ellington became not only an obsession but, in due course, a good friend and counselor.

During his Juilliard year he began playing at night spots around Manhattan, starting at a room frequented by prostitutes ("I'm in the great whorehouse piano tradition of Jelly Roll Morton"), but soon moving up to jazz clubs such as Gregory's, where he has worked since last May along with two of Duke's alumni, the alto saxophonist Russell Procope (Ellington, 1945-74) and the 72-year-old drummer Sonny Greer.

Kerr does not consider himself an archaeologist; he merely takes his music where his tastes lead him. He names among his primary influences the stride pianists James P. Johnson and Fats Waller, along with Art Ta-

tum, Armstrong, the Lion and Duke. According to his mother, since early childhood he has been a human tape recorder, recalling every song he has ever heard and every conversation of any consequence.

"I was fascinated with everything Duke wrote," he says, "but I always wanted to get deep into his repertoire and dig up some of the wonderful songs he himself had long since stopped playing."

During two sets at Gregory's, as a veteran Duke watcher myself, I tried to stump Kerr by requesting a succession of obscure Ellington and Strayhorn works. He not only played all of them, recalling the date of each, but in one instance, the poignant "Lotus Blossom," informed me that lyrics were added two days after Ellington's death, and proceeded to sing it in a modest functional voice.

During the Duke's last years Kerr became more closely involved with him, playing at tribute concerts and even subbing for him in the orchestra at the Central Presbyterian Church in New York during a service marking the maestro's 75th birthday—less than a month before his death.

Kerr's total recall of the Ellington oeuvre was directly helpful in other ways. In the summer of 1972, when Duke and the orchestra spent a week at the University of Wisconsin conducting workshops and giving concerts, Ellington was often questioned by students about some of his earlier pieces.

"That was before my time," he would reply with typical circumlocution. "I suggest you consult my expert, Brooks Kerr; he knows more about me than I do myself." And Kerr, then 20, invariably would come up with the answer.

Gregory's has become a hangout for anyone who clings to the Ellington legend. Other former band members, such as drummer Sam Woodyard, trumpeter Francis Williams and singer Betty Roche, have worked with Kerr. He has a new album out this week, "Soda Fountain Rag," a duo set with Sonny Greer, on Audiofidelity Records. Others, featuring Procope and a girl singer, will follow.

Considering his near-sightlessness a mere inconvenience, Kerr walks (without a cane) the few blocks to work from the town house where he lives with his mother. "The only thing that bothers me," he says, "is that I can't sight-read normally." Still, by bringing the music to within centimeters of his "good" eye, he can discern all he needs and memorize it in a flash.

He sums up his feelings very simply: "Ellington, of course, was one of the great composers of this century; yet when I took a test for admission at the Manhattan School and was required to play the work of a 'modern composer,' I suggested Duke and they found him unacceptable. I hope that we can eventually eliminate that kind of prejudice."



Brooks Kerr

VIC GIBBONS
45, All Saints Green,
Saint Ives,
Huntingdon,
CAMBS PE17 4YY
Telephone: (0480) 65695

May 1976

Additional ex-Ellington stars to tour with Chris Barber

The withdrawal of Brooks Kerr from the 'Echoes of Ellington tour' has resulted in an unexpected bonus for jazz fans - particularly those devotees of Duke Ellington's music. Brooks Kerr has been taken ill in New York and is replaced on the tour by Wild Bill Davis who has regularly featured on keyboards with both the Ellington and Count Basie orchestras. Also coming, as replacement for Sonny Greer, is one of the Duke's longest serving drummers Sam Woodyard. Russell Procope remains in the line-up on clarinet and alto sax. Although Procope played clarinet with Duke Ellington from 1949 to 1974 the alto sax is really his main instrument. He was of course kept out of the alto chair in the Ellington band by the great Johnnie Hodges.

Chris Barber has commissioned British arranger Alan Cohen to provide new scores on Ellington tunes especially for the tour.

Chris Barber's most recent L.P. (his 60th album) also has connections with Ellington. Entitled 'The Chris Barber Jubilee Tour' (BLP 12132/3) on Black Lion Records, it features a live concert with Ray Nance trumpeter and violinist with the Ellington orchestra. This is the last recording of Nance commercially available. Nance died recently after a lengthy illness. The 'Echoes of Ellington' tour comprises of a programme entirely 'Ellington' in content. There will be a set by Chris Barber's Jazz & Blues Band; then a set featuring the ex-Ellington guests Davis, Procope and Woodyard. The final set will be a 'small-big-band' session with the Barber Band augmented by the three guests.

EXTRA DATE : MONDAY MAY 31ST,
ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH
GLOUCESTER