

Eddie Durham Jazz Celebration 2019

Eddie Durham Tribute Band opens with "Swinging The Blues" by Eddie Durham

[music]

[music ends]

[applause]

John Mills on tenor sax, Russell Haight on tenor saxophone, Paul Deemer on trombone, Adrian Ruíz on trumpet.

Alright, Now we'd like to bring a very special Presentation...

Phil Schapp with you.. With me is Eddie Durham - Amazing "Gentlemen of Jazz", "Pioneer of The Electric Guitar" - "Stellar Performer" in many big band sections on trombone, ... "The Arranging and Compositional Pen Of Southwestern Jazz", and all-around good guy.

"Eddie brings some of that brings some of that "Western thing", which later became identified with Kansas City becomes the, you know, the name for that it could refer to it as Kansas City but that is something that Eddie brought which hadn't been there before."

[music]

"Stellar performer on trombone" "Pioneering Electric Guitarist" "He is also one of the ancestors of the electric guitar, playing amplified before electric, acoustically amplified, and then being really the very first jazz player to record on electric guitar.

Composer of the original Count Basie Orchestra. Major creator of Blues themes, such as "Good Morning Blues", and "Sent For You Yesterday And Here You Come Today".

He even wrote a couple of the ballad hits of the swing era, "I Don't Want to Set The World On Fire - Just Want to Start A Flame In Your Heart".

He wrote so much, he was a masterful genius of the arrangers, who gave the flavor of musical color and style to the Jimmie Lunceford Orchestra in the Swing Era.

"It was known as the "Harlem Express". It was a great show band, as well as a musically fascinating band."

[music]

What you see in that Lunceford short, where they're doing that thing, where they all stand up, that was undoubtedly choreographed by Eddie Durham, because that's all his trademark. He had all kinds of moves with the trombone, with the slide that he used to do."

[music]

He arranged "In The Mood" for Glenn Miller. I mean this guy's the guy!

[music]

"This cat has got the goods!" "It's a pity, that Eddie, you know, maybe he's up there and he's seeing it, but I think that the recognition of Eddie Durham by San Marcos, and that was of course started by the University, is unique! I don't know of any other place

[applause]

that honors [applause] a jazz musician like you've done...

"You know Dan is the world's most respected and beloved and accomplished jazz expert, and he knew, he was born in 1929 and I know you guys know all about Dan, but the bottom line is, you know, he knew Louie Armstrong, he knew Ornette Coleman, he knew Coleman Hawkins he

knew Eddie Durham.... so the fact that he's been part of this program for so long and it's kind of become a beloved guy on campus, and all that kind of stuff. It's unique!!"

"You know, the other thing that is very... every year the audience gets bigger and bigger. So the importance of what you're doing here, in San Marcos, at Texas State University, I'm here to tell you that this is such a special thing, and that needs to be nurtured, know I just hope that the powers that be and the people that could really realize how special it is...

[music]

[applause]

And with that great start, Welcome to everyone.

I'm so glad you're here to help us celebrate Eddie Durham tonight. I'm Thomas Clark the director of the School of Music at Texas State University. We've got a terrific event for you. Some of you who have been here for past events, you know what is in store for you. You're gonna need to fasten your seat belts because it's gonna be some terrific jazz music and some great ideas and insights about this jazz legend we're so proud of, Eddie Durham. I want to mention and thank sponsors for this event. This has long been supported by the City of San Marcos Arts Commission. Now we're enjoying Texas State University is enjoying some support from a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. And of course we're very proud that this is a project of the Jazz Studies area of the School of Music at Texas State. So we thank those supporters. In a little while I'll come back to tell you some more about the rest of tonight's event and to mention a word or two about tomorrow's event, but just to say you know you this is this all-star band that you've heard is one of three great jazz ensembles that the San Marcos community audience is going to have a chance to experience this all-star band of professionals is amazing. Tomorrow at 7 p.m. we have the Texas State University Jazz Ensemble performing as the front band for a concert by none other than the Count Basie Orchestra [applause] yes, it's pretty fantastic! That event is being sponsored by the University Arts Committee and we want to thank the campus community and especially I want to recognize Dr. John Fleming, the Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communication, who is here with us in the audience tonight. [applause] Just a little word for all of you who want to come back to hear the Texas State Jazz Ensemble and the Count Basie Orchestra. That will be a ticketed event tomorrow night. So you should check it out at "TXState Presents" that's our box office online and you can get tickets for that for tomorrow night. One of the other sponsors who's been very important for this is through the now many years of celebrating Eddie Durham, we've had great support from the administration of Texas State University. In particular the Provost. Not only the Provost Office, but Dr. Gene Bourgeois, the Provost of Texas State University, has a personal interest. He himself is a historian. He has a fondness for jazz and all kinds of different culture, and he also has been a great supporter in interacting with our local San Marcos community. I know that's very important to him for the university to connect with the community in which we live and work here. And from time to time that's been able to stop by we're so happy that this evening we have an opportunity to hear some remarks and to get help in celebrating Eddie Durham and this long-standing event. So let me introduce to you the Provost of Texas State University, Dr. Gene Bourgeois!

[applause]

Well, thank you, Tom, and it's good to be back. So as Tom said I'm Gene Bourgeois, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs here at Texas State University and on behalf of

President Trauth, and all the administration, I do want to warmly welcome you all to this the 2019 Eddie Durham Jazz Celebration. And I think as you've noted in the program this is the 15th celebration of Eddie Durham's stellar contributions to jazz, that for as many years, has been part of the long-running, the very long-running actually, Hill Country Jazz Fest. And I say what a wonderful way to swing into Black History Month. I'd also like to openly acknowledge some of my actual partners from way back in the day, Miss Marsha Topsy Durham, who can't be with us, members of the Calaboose Board, who may be here, and then also members of the Durham family who are not here. And then to all of our faculty and staff in the School of Music, who helped organize arrange, and put on this year's activities please accept my very warmest thanks, thank you all very much. [applause] Now I had a Board of Regents meeting earlier today and I actually also yesterday, and President Trauth and I had a very good successful Board of Regents meeting and I wasn't planning on coming down to San Marcos from Austin but tonight I want to extend special thanks to someone quite special to the Eddie Durham and Hill Country Jazz Fest activities. Dr. Keith Winking, professor in the School of Music.

[applause]

So at one time in my life I was a historian. I do consider myself still a historian, Tom, so I am still a historian or once was a practicing historian, before going over to what faculty call the dark side of academic administration. [laughter] Now I mention this because I'm not actually going to stick to an absolutely accurate retelling of all the dates associated with this Eddie Durham Jazz Celebration which I think and I hope Keith, you will accept. But suffice it to say that Keith and I through a friendship built partially upon a deep passion for college football. So I'm gonna have to say for him Notre Dame, right? the Fighting Irish for me, the fighting Tigers of LSU, we have a very deep personal bond between us for our love of college football. But we worked with each other in campus and community partners including Topsy Durham about 16 years ago to firmly establish an ongoing celebration of Eddie Durham's musical contributions. Now before that I have been working pretty closely with Miss Johnny Armstead and other community members here in San Marcos to advance the advancements and enhancements to, and recognition for the San Marcos Dunbar District. And at that time I discovered that Keith had actually already been involved in elevating the legacy of Eddie Durham. So, voila, when I was Chair of History we had a wonderful partnership between the Department of History, the Center for Texas Music History, and Keith and his partners in the School of Music. Well, tonight we recognize not only this 15th celebration of Eddie Durham's musical legacy, but we also celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Hill Country Jazz Fest. 30 years! So some of you have been here that long. 30 years for this Jazz Festival, which is the rest of the story because without the Hill Country Jazz Fest, there may not have been a component celebrating the legacy of Eddie Durham. And do you know who started the Hill Country Jazz Fest 30 years ago?... I do.... Dr. Keith Winking

[applause]

And I would add, for both of us, Keith, a much younger Keith Winking. But Keith, you've established a remarkable legacy here at Texas State. And within our wider community through these two events, among many other achievements. And I want to personally thank and recognize you for that. Please allow me to also recognize another gentleman closely associated with our Eddie Durham Celebration events the eminent jazz scholar Dan Morgenstern, who was featured in the video. Dan, as some of you may know, is a multiple Grammy winning jazz writer

and scholar, who has written for some of the premier jazz publications in America including "Metronome", "Jazz" and "Downbeat". As it happened, Keith and Dan bonded years ago over jazz in its history, not least of which touches on Eddy Durham, our son of San Marcos, and other Texas of Southwestern jazz kings from the past. So Dr. Winking helped land a National Endowment for the Arts grant that is funding work and efforts to recognize Dan's contributions over the years to the Eddie Durham Jazz Celebration. In addition to capturing and preserving Dan's extensive research into and knowledge about Kansas City jazz and related jazz lines. Also Hank Hehmsoth, who is somewhere over down there now alright, there's Hank. Hank, a faculty member also in our School of Music, co-partner with Keith and he's an award-winning performer in his own right. They got this grant and he is deeply involved in this preservation project. Thank you very much, Hank. [applause] You moved on me. You were over there a few minutes ago. Back to tonight's main story. So tonight we celebrate one of San Marcos' most renowned sons, Eddie Durham. And his and the Durham family's musical legacy. So Eddie was a native of San Marcos, and he lived his early years and was now recognized as a Dunbar Historical District. He was a prolific composer, arranger, and instrumentalist. He's widely credited, as you saw in the video, with being a pioneer of amplified guitar, influencing fellow Texan Charlie Christian, who became one of the most important guitarists in jazz history. Durham worked with iconic swing era bands including the Blue Devils, which you saw in the video Bennie Moten, Jimmie Lunceford, and then probably most aptly for this weekend's activities, Count Basie. The tunes Durham composed or arranged for these bands includes such classics as "Moten Swing", "Swinging the blues", "Topsy", "One O'Clock Jump", and "Jumpin' At the Woodside". In addition, he arranged music for Artie Shaw and Glenn Miller. I also want to point out that we have obviously, in our presence, and I've known him now for a number of years. He's a fellow Louisianan, Mr. Doug Lawrence. Thank you very much, Doug.

[applause]

...and he slipped out!... he's not on the kit anymore, but Mr. Butch Miles. Thank you, Butch!

[applause]

And obviously tonight you're gonna hear some of these tunes, so I want to say thank you all for being here, celebrating Black History Month with us at Texas State University, honoring Eddie Durham's legacy, so let's get this place swingin' thank you

[applause]

We're gonna continue on that. The first tune that we played was "Swinging the Blues" by Eddie Durham. And you heard Dr. Bourgeois mention "Topsy" and we're gonna dedicate this one to her. [Topsy is Eddie's daughter] This is "Topsy" [

music]

[applause]

and how about Mr. Butch Miles on drums, ladies and gentlemen

[applause]

Wow an all-star band not only with the great Butch Miles, but led by the great Doug Lawrence let's hear it for our Celebration All-Star Band! [applause] We're swinging now and yet there's more. Because we have another very special guest to introduce to you now. You've heard about the role that Dan Morgenstern played and continues to play in the lives of our jazz musicians here in celebrating Eddie Durham. And we have another partner in this endeavor now. He's a musician, a jazz musician in his own right, and a historian. He had, amongst his many other

credits and association, Loren Schoenberg was an associate and collaborator with Eddie Durham himself. And now has gone on, he has had very important affiliations with such organizations as the Lincoln Center the Smithsonian, NPR, and of course the Jazz History Museum of Harlem. It's a great honor to have him here to talk about and help us celebrate Eddie Durham. Would you please welcome jazz great Dr. Loren Schoenberg.

[applause]

Thank you. it's great to be here. I don't even know where to start, because the story's been told already we saw a great video about Eddie Durham, then Dr. Bourgeois gave you the outline of his career. So there's not much left for me to say,except.... I wouldn't be here without Eddie Durham. So I guess I'll humbly represent this evening the hundreds and hundreds, if not thousands, but literally hundreds of musicians and people that he sponsored, and and encouraged, and helped get a leg up in this crazy world of jazz, and crazy world of entertainment, and music in the United States. To make a long story short, 'cuz you're here to hear about Eddie Durham, not about me .But when I was nineteen, eighteen or nineteen years old, it was a club in New York, near where I went to Manhattan School of Music and right near there there was a club called the West End, and Eddie was playing in a band and of course, we all knew who Eddie Durham was. And I was so anxious to sit in. They took one look at this kid and figured, you know ,I wouldn't know any of the songs. And so they said "next time", so I actually took out my saxophone in the aisle and started playing. And so they let me sit in. And that began a long association with Eddie for many years. Eddie became to me, and to my parents, a family member. When my father, my father lived to be 80 years old, you know, when he passed away, on his desk dresser, among other things was Eddie's funeral card from Eddie's service. It meant so much to him. My parents had never met anyone like Eddie Durham. And so, thanks to him, I had a chance to pursue a career in music. But enough about me, let's talk about Eddie. And one specific element, I thought I would focus just on one little element of his great career. And I'm not going to talk too much, cuz you want to hear this great band play. This is the 90th anniversary of a very important moment. And that was the time when Eddie Durham met Bill Basie. Bill Basie was not quite Count Basie yet, but he was Bill Basie, a piano player from New Jersey, from Red Bank, New Jersey, and Eddy was ,of course, from San Marcos ,Texas. And they met in Oklahoma City, of all places. They both had wound up there for a variety of reasons, and we're playing in a band called Walter Page's "Blue Devils". And Walter Page's "Blue Devils", back in those days, is what they called a "territory band", that there were bands that were famous in certain parts of the country. And they played music long before mass communication, and the way that radio and television, and and mass media has destroyed a lot of things that were individual about areas. People sounded a certain way, not only from a certain state or a certain region. People actually talked differently in one county to another. They, the food was slightly different and the music they liked was different. And something happened in Oklahoma City, that's where Charlie Christian went, and it's where Eddie Durham went, and Count Basie went, and Basie and Eddie met up at that point. Eddie would have been, what, he was born in 1906, he would have been 23. Count Basie was born in 1904, so he would have been 25 years old. And to make a long story very short, what happened was, Count Basie was a guy who had a lot of great ideas, didn't quite know what to do with them, but he had a lot of great ideas. Eddie was a guy who not only had great ideas, but could orchestrate and could write, and put those ideas down on paper. And that began a very special collaboration

as they played in Walter Page's band, and they went from there to another band called Bennie Moten's band in Kansas City. Now, just to tell you how important this was, Eddie became famous long before Count Basie. People around the world and people around, definitely around the United States, and there were people around the world listening to all these things. They knew who Eddie Durham was, in 1935 and 1936, because he was with Cab Calloway's band, and that he was most famously with the Jimmie Lunceford Orchestra. You saw that little film clip, I mean they were making movies! They were very famous and he was writing a lot of the music. Count Basie started to become famous a few years later but he had a problem. Which is that the music that the band was playing was not that great. It was good but it was cobbled together, a few arrangements from here, a few arrangement from there, so what happened? Count Basie went to Eddie Durham in 1937 and offered him a one-year contract. He'd be paid more than anybody else in the band. He played the trombone, he played the guitar, but most importantly he would compose a library of music for the Count Basie band. And he stayed there for one year, from August 1937 to August 1938. And that's when all this magic happened. And I can only think that Count Basie and Eddie Durham would be thrilled to know that San Marcos and this specific program that you're all doing here, to such great success, and I'll just acknowledge all the folks who've been up here tonight, and have talked already and making this happen. This is a unique thing in the world! ...And that's no hyperbole... that's a fact! I know of no other, no other series of concerts and educational events, that is dedicated to one particular artist, in the place that they come from, that has happened so many years in succession, and then add to that, that it's not you're not talking about Basie, or Ellington, or Benny Goodman, or the big-name people. You're talking about somebody who was just as talented, was just as known, just as respected, but who did not have that international aspect. Who, did not have that kind of fame frankly, except within the music world. And what you've done here is way beyond what's done for a lot a lot of other folks who are not nearly as deserving. So can you please give yourselves a round of applause, San Marcos Texas! [applause] it really is true! And I'm going to stop talking because you want to hear some great music tonight. But before you hear some great music, would you mind if I just walked over to the piano and played a little something for Eddie?

[applause]

[applause]

Loren Schoenberg! Ladies and Gentlemen!