

November 7, 1986

Dr. Alec Wyton
St. James Episcopal Church
Madison Avenue at 71st Street
New York, NY 10021

Dear Alec:

Your arrangement of Billy Strayhorn's "Lotus" is beautiful.

One of my fondest memories of "Lotus" was during the sixties, just after Billy's death.

During his *Rainbow Grill* engagements, my brother, Duke Ellington, would play "Lotus" as a little private prelude to each show. He would go silently to the piano, while the stage was dark, and softly play it. It was like a little whispered tribute to Billy—perhaps even a little prayer for his soul—knowing that God was listening.

As you know, Alec, Duke titled one of his sacred songs, "Every Man Prays in His Own Language (and there is no language that God does not understand)."

God bless you and yours always!

— Ruth Ellington Boatwright