

Austria provided in the 18th century for Franz Joseph Haydn lasted only 29 years.) But critics have often said that after Ellington's "greatest period," 1940–42, there was a falling off, that he exceeded the limits of his talent in his later, more extended compositions. Crouch, a New York writer and critic, begs to differ.

Ellington wrote and recorded hundreds of compositions and arrangements between 1924 and 1973, and, Crouch argues, they "make the case for their creator as the most protean of American geniuses," whose achievements in music rival those, in other media, of Herman Melville, Ernest Hemingway, Fred Astaire, and Frank Lloyd Wright.

Like Bach and Handel, Crouch says, Ellington "was an inveterate recycler." He extended earlier brief melodies, written in the 78-rpm era, into 15-minute masterpieces such as "Tattooed Bride" (1948). His earlier "tonal portraits" of uptown New York—including "Echoes of Harlem," "Harmony in Harlem," and "Harlem Speaks"—evolved into the 14-minute "Harlem" (1950), which was his favorite longer work. "It is one of Ellington's most thorough and masterly explorations of blues harmony," Crouch says.

"It is true," the author admits, "that the early '40s were a kind of golden period for the Ellington Orchestra. In 1939, Ellington had brought the marvelous composing talent of Billy Strayhorn into the organization and was soon rewarded with Strayhorn's 'Take the A Train.'" About the same time, bassist Jimmy

Blanton and tenor saxophonist Ben Webster joined the Ellington organization and were prominently featured in such classics as "Jack the Bear" and "Cotton Tail."

But Ellington's sensibility was always the determining one—"which is why the music maintained its identity through so many changes in the players, no matter how strong their individual personalities," Crouch points out. The Afro-Hispanic and exotic rhythms from around the world that Ellington explored in such Blanton-Webster classics as "Conga Brava" and "The Flaming Sword" were "the basis for such greater works in the '60s and '70s as "Afro-Bossa," "The Far East Suite," and "The Togo Brava Suite." Ellington also brought "new authority and depth" in his later years to his arrangement of popular songs, Crouch says.

The finest European concert musicians are expected to get better with middle age, Crouch says, but jazz musicians are supposed to decline after they leave youth behind. "In fact," he maintains, "Ellington's greatest band existed not in the '40s but between 1956 and 1968. . . . Beginning in the middle '50s, what he got from Johnny Hodges, Paul Gonsalves, Harry Carney, Lawrence Brown, Ray Nance, Cootie Williams, Russell Procope, Jimmy Hamilton, and the others could only have been achieved by men who had lived beyond 40 or 50." By then, they had developed a matchless intimacy with their horns, and had experienced most of the joys and sorrows of life. "It's all in their playing," he says.

## OTHER NATIONS

### *China's Slaughter of Innocents*

*A Survey of Recent Articles*

*This baby girl . . . is now 100 days old. . . . She is in good health and has never suffered any illness. Due to the current political situation and heavy pressures that are too difficult to explain, we, who were her parents for these first days, cannot continue taking care of her. We can only hope that in this world there is a kind-hearted person who will care for her. Thank you. —In regret and shame, your father and mother.*

—A note left with an infant born in 1992 and abandoned in China's Hunan Province

In the past few years, the coercive and inhumane nature of China's population control policy has become impossible to

deny. The policy has met with widespread resistance in China, especially from peasant women, who, despite the threat of heavy

financial and other penalties, continue to bear more than the officially permitted one or two children, hoping to produce a son to carry on the family line and to provide security in old age. As a result of the regime's draconian policy, girls (as well as handicapped infants) are increasingly "thrown away," through sex-selective abortion, abandonment, and infanticide. By some estimates, the number of "missing girls" (reflected in the abnormally high ratio of male infants to female ones) has been growing by more than one million a year. In some regions of the country, Kay Johnson, a professor of Asian studies and politics at Hampshire College, Amherst, Mass., writes in *Population and Development Review* (Mar. 1996), "there is mounting evidence" that female infants are being abandoned by the tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, each year.

Originally, in 1979, China's communist regime adopted a policy of limiting births to one per family. Unless couples obtained an official permit, they were not supposed to have a child, and a woman who became pregnant without a permit was obliged to have an abortion. Despite extensive efforts at enforcement, overall compliance with the policy was low. During the late 1980s, the regime slightly relaxed the formal policy, permitting rural couples whose first child was a girl to have a second child. At the same time, however, the regime stepped up enforcement.

In Hunan Province, in south-central China, Johnson says, the local cadres charged with implementing the unpopular decrees were caught between the strong desires of their fellow villagers and the stern demands of the authorities. The cadres often coped by turning a blind eye to abandonment of infant girls, and simply required that

couples end up with no more than the authorized number of children.

Among the abandoned infants housed in state-run welfare centers, Johnson notes, death rates are high: more than 40 percent in some of the major orphanages and as high as 80 percent in some of the smaller, more remote, or more poorly equipped ones. But, she points out, "even a well-equipped and devoted orphanage staff would face a daunting task." Many of the children "are in critical condition when they arrive, due to exposure, dehydration, malnutrition," and other afflictions. "It is likely that many abandoned infants die before they are recovered or that they are not recovered at all."

The "dying rooms" (as a 1995 British TV documentary termed the orphanages) are not "just a matter of bad institutional management, as some Western observers have asserted," says John S. Aird, a former U.S. Census Bureau senior research specialist on China and author of *Slaughter of the Innocents: Coercive Birth Control in China* (1990). "The real problem," he declares in the *American Enterprise* (Mar.-Apr. 1996), "is the Chinese government's attitude toward the orphans. China's leaders consider these children 'surplus' population. . . . To these authorities, the death of orphans is nothing to regret, because it furthers their objective of reduced population growth."

The current birth control crackdown, launched in 1991, is regarded in Beijing as highly successful. Last October, it was announced that China's population growth was actually below the state targets from 1991 through 1994 and could be as much as 15 million persons below target by the end of 1995. "Still," Aird notes, "the authorities warn the local cadres not to relax their family planning enforcement."

## City in the Chips

"Dateline Bangalore: Third World Technopolis" by John Stremlau, in *Foreign Policy* (Spring 1996), Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2400 N St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037-1153.

During the British Raj, the south Indian city of Bangalore, located on a cool, lush plateau 3,000 feet above sea level, a haven from the torrid coastal cities, was a favorite retirement spot for senior colonial officers. Today, with a growing population of nearly five million and a booming computer soft-

ware industry, the onetime "Pensioner's Paradise" has become the subcontinent's "Silicon City," reports Stremlau, a staff adviser at the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict.

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