

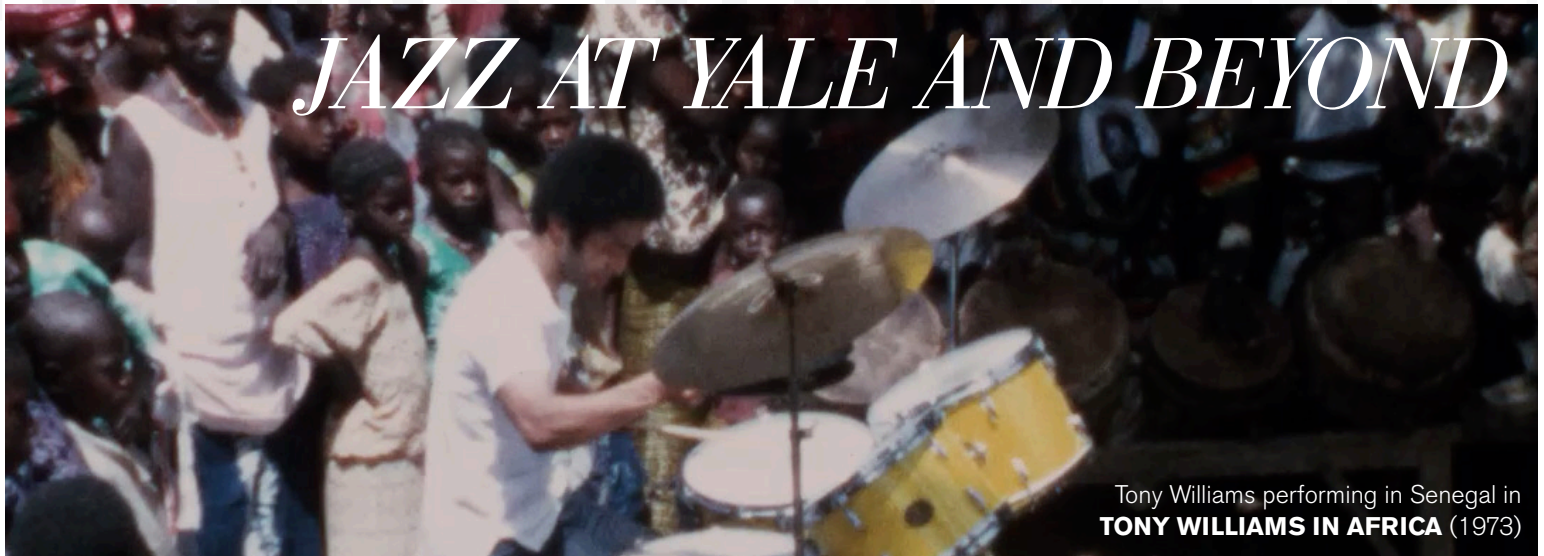
TREASURES FROM THE YALE FILM ARCHIVE

AN ONGOING SERIES OF CLASSIC AND CONTEMPORARY FILMS PRESENTED ON FILM BY THE YALE FILM ARCHIVE

CONSERVATORY WITHOUT WALLS:

FRIDAY
OCTOBER 14, 2022
7 PM • HUMANITIES
QUADRANGLE

PRESENTED WITH SUPPORT FROM
PAUL L. JOSKOW '70 M.PHIL., '72 PH.D.



Tony Williams performing in Senegal in
TONY WILLIAMS IN AFRICA (1973)

WHAT'S HAPPENING (1972, 2" open reel videotape to digital file, 58 min.)

In 2014, two large plastic shipping containers were discovered on the top shelf of the Yale Film Study Center vault in the basement of the old Whitney Humanities Center at 53 Wall Street. Each 12-inch diameter open reel tape weighed 14 pounds, and was labeled "DUKE ELLINGTON AT YALE." Without the equipment to play them, staff sent the tapes to DC Video, a specialized archival video transfer lab in California, one of the last places capable of retrieving information from this type of videotape, originally developed in the 1956 and made obsolete with the introduction of newer formats in the 1980s. The tapes were cleaned, baked, and transferred, and the resulting files revealed that the contents were two episodes of a local news and public affairs program called "What's Happening," produced by WTIC in Hartford (now WFSB), hosted by Brad Davis and John Sablon. Featuring interviews with performers including Max Roach, Jo Jones, and Dizzy Gillespie, as well as archival footage of Duke Ellington and his orchestra and footage from the 1972 concert in Woolsey Hall, the episodes are a treasure trove of documentation from this momentous event.



TONY WILLIAMS IN AFRICA (1973, 16mm, 37 min.)

Willie Ruff, born in Sheffield, Alabama, in 1931, attended the Yale School of Music as an undergraduate (1953) and graduate student (1954), and returned to Yale to teach in 1971. Ruff taught, performed as half of the Mitchell-Ruff Duo, and made films about the history of music around the world, before retiring in 2017. His film collection is part of the Yale Film Archive. Ruff's film about the American jazz drummer Tony Williams traveling to Senegal features Super 8mm footage of Williams and African drummers, as well as a framing section with Ruff, Williams, and pianist Dwike Mitchell presenting the footage on 16mm to local children. As Ruff wrote later, "[i]t took me about a year to finish it, mainly for teaching purposes, and I began using it almost immediately in classes at Yale. Tony saw it then and declared it to probably be the best work of his life. The fact is, he didn't understand what I was really after during the entire grueling enterprise, until he saw it on the Moviola, and I am told that he never stopped talking about it for the rest of his short life [as] one of his finest musical accomplishments. For me, it was special in every way, for I had wanted to make a film about the talking drum, and its legal removal in all the slave-holding states in America. I had to shoot it myself on Super 8 because my grant from the NEA was so small I couldn't afford to fly a 16mm camera crew to Africa." Ruff donated the only existing 16mm print of the film to the Yale Film Archive in 2017, along with the original, unedited Super 8mm rolls that he shot in Senegal. A public screening at Yale of the original print in March, 2020, led to a hybrid analog/digital preservation project, supported by the National Film Preservation Foundation, to safeguard the film and create new screening prints and digital files.



For more on Willie Ruff and the Ellington Fellowship, visit the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library for the exhibit The Ellington Fellowship at 50, featuring unique manuscripts, photographs, and more from the Library's collection, on display through February 1, 2023. The celebration of "Willie Ruff and the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Ellington at Yale Series" will continue on April 2, 2023, with a concert performance at Woolsey Hall of Epitaph, the magnum opus of virtuoso bassist, composer, and Ellington fellow Charles Mingus, in honor of Mingus's centennial.

NEXT UP: BRITISH FILMMAKER CHARLIE SHACKLETON'S 2021 FILM **THE AFTERLIGHT** EXISTS IN ONLY ONE COPY IN THE ENTIRE WORLD, A SINGLE 35MM PRINT. DON'T MISS YOUR CHANCE TO SEE THIS BEAUTIFUL MEDITATION ON MEMORY AND CINEMA, WITH THE FILMMAKER IN PERSON FOR A Q&A, IN THE AUDITORIUM AT 53 WALL ST., **MONDAY, OCTOBER 24 AT 7PM.** THEN, DEE REES'S AWARD-WINNING DEBUT **PARIAH** (2011), ABOUT A BLACK TEENAGER JUGGLING CONFLICTING IDENTITIES AS SHE COMES OUT AS A LESBIAN, SCREENS ON 35MM ON **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28, AT 7PM** IN THE HUMANITIES QUADRANGLE, 320 YORK.