

THE JAZZ REVIEW

*Volume 2 / Number 10 / November 1959 / Fifty Cents*



The Style of  
John Coltrane Part II

Don Redman: Jazz  
Composer-Arranger

Wayne Shorter

Muddy Waters

*cat*



we're proud to say...

# Barney Kessel

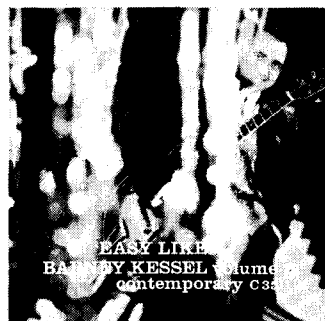
first place 1956, 1957 and 1958 Down Beat,  
Metronome and Playboy polls

# records for

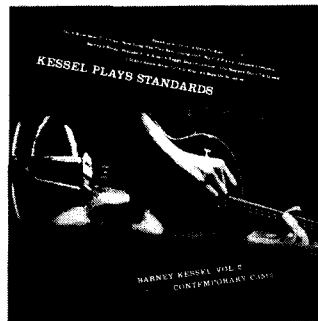
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# Contemporary

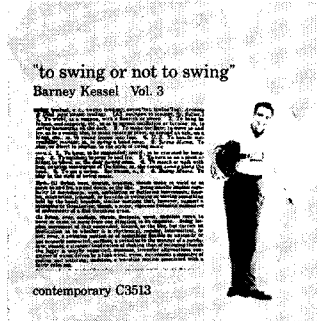
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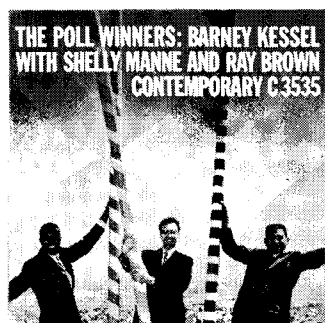
Barney & quintet featuring Bob Cooper, oboe & tenor sax, on 12 favorites like *My Old Flame*, *Speak Low*, *Love Is Here To Stay*, etc. C3512



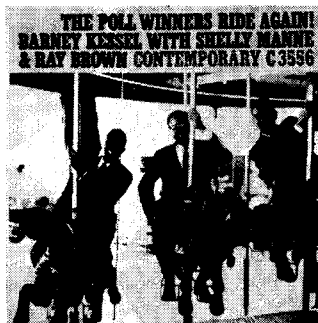
Barney in a free-wheeling session with "Sweets" Edison, Bill Perkins, Georgie Auld, Red Mitchell, Jimmie Rowles, Shelly Manne, etc. C3513



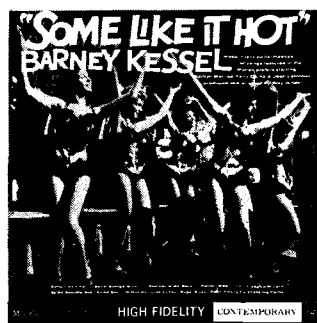
Barney and his arrangements of standards for woodwind orchestra. *Laura*, *Makin' Whoopee*, *Carioca*, *Indian Summer*, etc. C3521 & Stereo S7001



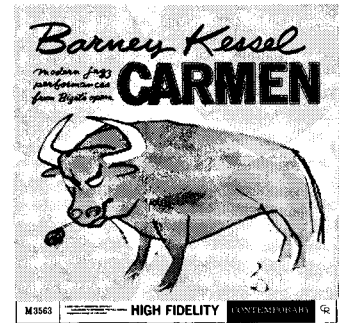
Barney, with Shelly Manne & Ray Brown (who also were 1st in the '56, '57, and '58 Down Beat, Metronome, Playboy polls). C3535 and Stereo S7010



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# LETTERS

## APPEAL

Trumpeter Punch Miller is very ill, broke, and unable to play in New Orleans. He and his niece are being evicted from her house, and he is ineligible for welfare because he doesn't have resident status in Louisiana.

Bill Russell (600 Chartres St., New Orleans, La.) has set up a fund to help him.

Punch is a fine person and doesn't deserve the rotten breaks life has tossed at him.

Tony Standish  
London, England

## DEFENSE

Concerning your reference to Ralph Gleason's "slashing review" of THE JAZZ STORY I should greatly appreciate it if you corrected the erroneous impression Mr. Gleason gave his readers (and now yours) that my reason for narrating Leonard Feather's script represented "one of the most horrendous efforts to grab a buck that an industry where profit is the main motive has ever produced."

Somewhat apologetically I direct your attention to the fact that my income from television is (how do I say this without seeming gauche?) well, **ridiculously high**. To date I recall receiving no royalties whatever from THE JAZZ STORY album, and when I do they will, as anyone familiar with the record business should know, either be very small or else materially non-existent because of the custom whereby the artist-pays-for-the-date.

Mr. Gleason's usual sensitivity and intelligence would seem to have deserted him in this particular instance. He would have been much wiser to simply criticize the album itself (which was by no means perfect) and not stoop to imputing base motives to the party narrating it.

Steve Allen  
Hollywood

## ALL JAZZ RADIO

I have some comment about these "all-jazz" radio stations. These stations are rapidly becoming mere purveyors of background music, playing only the most recent records, making sure that there is a minimum of music that would catch the attention of the aver-

age listener. In all the hours I've listened to WHAT-FM in Philadelphia, I've heard very little of the jazz recorded before the days of the 15-20,000 cycles hi-fi, in proportion to the amount of mass-produced trivia which most musicians are indulging in today. Unlike as in other classical forms, you can't re-record pieces in high-fidelity, and have to accept the fact that an important part of our jazz heritage was produced before good recording techniques were developed. These stations (partly, I suppose, because their long schedules make it hard for the programmers to listen to the records and make up creative programs) are bringing up the public to a jazz that does without Parker, Young, most of Ellington, Bessie Smith, Tatum, and many others who recorded little, if anything in good sound. I personally think that 25 minutes a week on WQXR with John Wilson are more valuable than 12 hours a day on ten all-jazz stations across the country, at least in this important aspect.

Roland Hirsch  
Georges Mills, N.H.

## OUR SEVEREST FRIEND

I've been reading this magazine of yours since the first issue, mainly because there's nothing else. It is unfortunate, though, that the stickum you use to hang the parts together must be this bright and wearying snobbery, so unsupportable in view of your failings. I was shocked at Mr. Keepnews' attack on John Holmes' book, *The Horn*, and this shock reverberates a bit more somehow by virtue of your cozy and rather nauseating little gossip column by Mr. Hentoff (worth a letter in itself), who presumes to discuss a reform of the language of jazz, himself employing a syntax and vocabulary ("transocciate") so tasteless as to be a kind of satire on the style which grows out of them. When Nat gets around to straightening out (after a course in Freshman Rhetoric), I think that before enlightening the world of jazz criticism at large, he might first pass the word to his own staff, particularly to Miss Clar, a Critic so completely mastered by the academic style that she is able to write dully about the most forthright and vigorous music.

I think perhaps the whole staff should get together and turn each other's malvolent insecurity on the monthly offerings, so as to eliminate such things as these:

"There's Bird in spots in the timbre of his tone." (Mr. Farmer)

"If it (Mr. Russo's critical position) needs a name, it can be called a relational-absolute view." (Mr. Russo)

"... his (Webster's) sonority alone is music to read F. Scott Fitzgerald by." (Mr. Coulter not only provides us with this fine occasion for embarrassed laughter, but later feels obliged to display his irrelevant and incomplete knowledge of Hopkins, Pope, and Roy Harris in a discussion of how "Lulled

by soft zephyrs through the broken pane" needs to be declaimed. One might forgive a declamatory interpretation of this line by one of the younger primitive poets, but never a critic.)

And finally, Miss Clar's well nigh incomparable explanation of swing, (before which she generously informs us that jazz and Gospel **do** swing). "This movement is achieved in two ways: first, by retarded entries and delayed attacks of notes (in other words, the performer plays a shade behind the strict metronomic beat of the music so that the beat becomes an exterior force which pulls the music after it); second, by the simultaneous presence of tension and relaxation in the player—that is, the player makes an effort to relax in order to maintain the loose flow of the rhythm, yet at the same time he is on edge in order to avoid a structural disintegration of the rhythmic and melodic phrases (which would occur were he to play too far behind the beat or were he to anticipate it.)" I think this not only slovenly and unclear, but misleading. The reader who needs to be told that Gospel swings may naively suppose that anticipation of the beat always destroys swing, which is absurd; or that there is a given place behind the beat where the notes must be attacked—an equally absurd idea, held by many young saxophone players I suspect. The approach to and holding back from the beat (acceleration and retardation) form flexible patterns, and it is in the sophistication of these patterns, and their relation to melody, that swing exists.

I am sure you yourselves can supply more criticism of this kind; so please stop coming on with all this jive like you know everything. People who are hip knew about Monk, Miles, Philly Joe and the Ward Singers long before you started waving the flag. And it's **de rigueur** these days to stroke the chin thoughtfully while listening to James P. and Jelly—you didn't invent that either. In fact, there's really not a great deal in your little Magazine that hasn't been said before, and frequently more clearly, with less pretense. You ought to think about these things, and stop paying attention to these fan letters from the innocents.

This having been stated, I must now admit that *The Jazz Review* does have more spirit, knowledge and precision than any other magazine in the (American) field. The interviews of older jazzmen are interesting and otherwise unavailable documents. Occasional articles by Mr. Williams are among the best jazz criticism (no caps) I have ever read, and Wellstood's review of the *Monk's Music* transcriptions was beyond any disparagement I can form. But bear in mind that Mr. Holmes was able, at times, to write very poetically, about some things in the world of jazz that nobody else has yet got close to, including yourselves.

Frederick Conn  
Brooklyn N.Y.



Bob Cato

The Jazz Review—with this issue—has been in existence for a year. We are grateful to our readers—and to the advertisers—for their support. We are neither prosperous nor ingenuous enough to be in the least complacent about what we have accomplished so far. But we have tried to make each issue better than the last, and although we have not always succeeded, that remains our goal. We owe particular thanks to our contributors throughout the world. They have taken so much time and care with their work, we know, because they too believe that jazz and the men who create it are important enough to be treated with time and care. And hardest of all, with real understanding. In the coming years, we hope to grow in understanding—and in scope.

**Nat Hentoff**  
**Martin Williams**  
**Hsio Wen Shih**

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## NEW CONTRIBUTORS

Don Heckman studied alto with Lee Konitz and composition with the Hungarian composer Ernst Von Dohnanyi. He now lives in New York, and divides his time between composing and writing.

Alexis Korner is a singer and guitarist well-known in London folk-music circles. Harvey Pekar is nineteen, and is a sophomore at Western Reserve University. He says that he has spent a lot of time hanging around a delicatessen, but, although sympathetic, would not call himself a beatnik.

# DON REDMAN

JAZZ COMPOSER-ARRANGER

It has been close to twenty years since anyone has really paid much attention to the pre-modern composer and arranger. We live in the era of George Russell, Manny Albam and Gil Evans. It would seem from the recordings of the past decade that some of our greatest and most original minds have been all but forgotten: Benny Carter, Don Redman, Jesse Stone, Eddie Wilcox, Eddie Durham, and even later men like Walter Gil Fuller. For more than a decade, and for some much more, none of these men has been called upon by either major or minor firms for the quality and originality in composition and arrangement that is so necessary to sustain jazz. While the history books, and they are in many ways inadequate, have noted most of their contributions, they have done so without adequate recognition of their true significance. A series of articles may result from further research, but it is fitting to begin with the first and one of the greatest of all jazz composers-arrangers: Don Redman.

There may be a younger reader who will say, "Now, who is Don Redman?" But it is not only to him that this biography is addressed: there are many older people, followers and professionals in the field, who seem to have forgotten about Redman's talents.

Don Redman introduced arranged jazz in New York while with the Billy Paige band from Pittsburgh in 1922 and went on from there to be the jazz arranger in Fletcher Henderson's first great band, between 1924 and 1927. During those years he wrote arrangements for the Henderson library that pioneered many of the standard techniques of arrangers all during the swing era of the middle and later 'thirties. In 1927 he took an average Midwestern band, McKinney's Cotton Pickers, with vague qualities of musicianship and showmanship and little individuality, and made it one of the four top jazz orchestras for the duration of his four years stay, in competition with Fletcher Henderson's, Duke Ellington's and Alphonso Trent's. He scored some exceptional small group sides for Louis Armstrong during the same period and arranged for Paul Whiteman and Ben Pollack's bands as well.

He formed his own orchestra late in 1931 and it was the equal in musicianship, inspiration and verve

of any playing over the next several years. A series of wonderful recordings resulted. By 1940 he dropped his band and turned almost entirely to writing for others, turning out some notable hits, among them **Deep Purple** for Jimmy Dorsey, **Five O'Clock Whistle** for Count Basie, and **Things Ain't What They Used To Be** for Cootie Williams. He was the first to take a big band overseas on a continental tour after World War II in 1946-47 to tremendous acclaim and upon his return continued free-lance commercial arranging. After several years he teamed with Pearl Bailey, leading a band accompanying her and writing her arrangements. Today he's still free-lancing for people like Sugar Ray Robinson, for CBS and for many transcription and record firms and still working with Pearl.

He's always done such a professional job that hardly anyone has ever stopped to think that perhaps he has yet to realize his full potential in jazz. It would be a marvelous thing should one of the major recording firms give him the freedom they have extended to the younger arrangers and composers over the past decade.

A most welcome addition to the jazz library would be an lp from Victor and one from Columbia who hold the bulk of Don's best orchestral work. Victor has some twenty good sides of the 1938 through 1940 period, and Columbia has an even better and wider range of material from 1932 through 1937 on Brunswick, Columbia, Perfect and Vocalion dates. Only Decca in the Brunswick "Harlem Jazz" set (no longer in print) has ever issued anything by Redman; that was the superior **Chant of the Weed** and **Shakin' the African** from late 1931, just as the band was organizing. Victor's last Cotton Pickers collection was ten-inch LPT 24.

Regardless of reissue, let's hope that Don Redman is plucked out of the bland commercial atmosphere that he has been a part of for such a long time and given an lp without strings attached so that he can give us some more of the jazz that he still has up his sleeve.

**FRANK DRIGGS**

**What follows is Don Redman's story, told in his own words.**





I was a child prodigy you know. From the age of three I was performing in public. I didn't have much of any kind of instruction, just started in playing. By the time I was fourteen I was playing music regularly. In grade school I had charge of the number three band. They had several different bands, all graded according to their ability. After a while I moved up to be in charge of the number two band, but I never did get to the number one spot, although at that time I was playing all the instruments, especially cornet. I started working around town (Piedmont, West Virginia) with a bunch of local musicians, none of whom ever left town.

Actually, I began writing arrangements for some of the touring road shows that came to town, when I was in my teens. Our band was only seven pieces and we'd back up the acts, and occasionally I'd do an original tune. Being a country boy I didn't know much about copyrighting songs and lost **Prohibition Blues** that way. It was a pretty big hit later on.

After I finished high school I went to Storer College in Harper's Ferry and majored in music, graduating in three years. Then I joined Billy Paige's Broadway Syncopators from Pittsburgh and spent the next year or two with them. They were very popular around Pittsburgh in the early twenties, and were considered, along with Lois Deppe's band, as the top band from that part of the country. Earl Hines came to town about the same time I did, and he was great even then. He joined Deppe's band.

Jim Fellman was our pianist and he was great. Earl got something from him then. Fellman couldn't read and he died by the time Billy Paige left Pittsburgh, so we sent to Boston to get Roy Cheeks. He's still around New York today, playing mostly exclusive supper clubs and that sort of thing, because he had a fair voice, just enough to get by with as an entertainer.

Bart Howard out of Toledo, was another fine pianist around Pittsburgh then, and so was "Toodle-oo" Johnson, who played in all the sporting houses. He was a little hunch-backed guy, about the same size as Chick Webb, but he could really play in that style. Deppe's band got by because of Earl and himself, although both Joe Smith and his brother Russell, were with him for a while. Deppe was a terrific singer, and did some numbers with McKinney later on, when I was there; I remember Ben Bernie's theme **It's a Lonesome Old Town**. He's out in Chicago now, doing mostly church work, but his voice is badly cracked. He was very big in show business back then, doing some of the "Great Day" shows and introducing **Without a Song**.

Our band became so popular that Paul Specht

picked us up and brought us to New York under his banner. We were the first to play arrangements in New York and did very well for a while, but we broke up pretty quickly.

I wasn't in town but a few days after that when I got a phone call to come and make a record date for Emerson. I went down to the studio and found Fletcher Henderson on the date. There was a band there, but it wasn't his band. He didn't have a band then, but was kind of a house pianist for Emerson and he worked behind some of the singers like Edith Wilson. On this date, Florence Mills was singing. Fletcher had an in with W. C. Handy who knew him from the South. Handy had a publishing company, Handy and Pace, and also Black Swan records, and Fletcher was house man for them also.

On the Florence Mills date the band consisted of Howard Scott and Elmer Chambers on trumpets, George Brashear on trombone, Fletcher, Charlie Dixon on banjo, and myself. I even played piano on some of them, and there were no drums, because they hadn't learned how to record them. I remember accompanying Baby Benbow on piano on one session. She was pretty popular at that time.

By the time we graduated to Columbia we added a man here and there. Coleman Hawkins came in from Mamie Smith's band, and Billy Fowler came in on baritone. Joe Smith made some of the early dates too, before he left and went out of town.

Columbia's studios were on Columbus Circle where the Coliseum building is now. On one date we were to make some instrumentals for them with the band, even though it still didn't belong to anyone. After we recorded that day, someone told us about an offer for an audition at the Nora Bayes Theatre (Little Theatre) on 44th Street in Shubert Alley. We didn't want to go because we didn't have any arrangements or any repertoire. The guy who told us about the job said we ought to use the same tunes we recorded that day. We didn't even have all the stuff with us, just some of the blues things we made with the singer. I remember we made the **Dicty Blues** that day, and went down and auditioned with that stuff and got the job, which was for the Club Alabam'. That was the Cotton Club of that era.

When we went into the Club we added Kaiser Marshall on drums, Ralph Escudero on tuba, Allie Ross, a violinist, as front man, and Heard (I forget his first name), a trombonist and a nice arranger. We decided to make Fletcher the leader because he was a college graduate and presented a nice appearance. We became popular right away and used to broadcast over WHN all the time. Edith Wilson was on the bill with us and she wanted Hawk to come out on

stage and play the blues behind her. He didn't mind, but he wanted to get paid for it. George White was the manager of the club and he told Fletcher to fire Hawk. Since we were doing terrific business and had gotten other offers from Roseland and other places, we decided we'd give notice to a man if Hawk was fired. We moved over to Roseland and from there on we were the top band in New York. No one rivalled us then.

When I was in Pittsburgh I'd heard a lot about Louis Armstrong, and Fletcher wanted to get another good man in the band, so we got him away from Joe Oliver in 1924. Kaiser Marshall had a car and brought us downtown to meet Louis. He was big and fat, and wore high top shoes with hooks in them, and long underwear down to his socks. When I got a load of that, I said to myself, who in the hell is this guy? It can't be Louis Armstrong. But when he got on the bandstand it was a different story. Joe Oliver sent along his book of tunes when Louis joined the band, and right away I picked out **Dippermouth Blues** as a framework for Louis. We called it **Sugarfoot Stomp** and it used to go over very big. In fact, Louis, his style, and his feeling, changed our whole idea about the band musically.

We used to have battles of music with Sam Lanin all the time. He was at one end of the hall and we were at the other, and in the middle was the arrangers' table. All the time both bands were there, the arrangers' table used to be full. We were always making up new arrangements trying to top theirs. They had Red Nichols, Miff Mole and Vic Berton in their band. We used to tear off the top of any new arrangement and put a fake title on it to throw them off . . . we'd be trying to see what the other was playing. They had one arrangement that really used to break up the crowds, and Fletcher sent his men all over town trying to get copies. They called it **Hole in the Wall** and we didn't find out for a month that it was really **Milenburg Joys** that they were playing. We had the best musicians in town playing with us then.

We needed another reedman and I wanted to get Vance Dixon in the band, but he didn't want to leave Virginia, so I sent for Milt Senior who was with the Cotton Pickers. When he wouldn't come to New York, Louis suggested we get Buster Bailey out of King Oliver's band. He joined us the night he hit town, and we featured him on numbers like **Dizzy Fingers**, **Tiger Rag** and he broke up the place. Jimmy Dorsey was there that night and he came every night after that.

In the three years I was with Fletcher, the only other one to make any arrangements was Coleman Haw-

kins, and he'd bring in about two or three a year, because he was lazy. He did a terrific job on **Singin' in the Rain**. The only other arranger was Ken Macomber and he'd do the new hits from the Broadway shows which we had to do to satisfy the customers. After I left Fletcher started writing, and Charlie Dixon did some too.

I wasn't getting but \$25.00 an arrangement in those days, until Paul Whiteman gave me a blanket order for twenty arrangements at \$100.00 a piece, and paid me the \$2000.00 right then and there. I was out of this world then, because the usual \$25.00 was all anyone was getting. I did **Whiteman Stomp** for both him and Fletcher, as well as several others he recorded. Fats Waller sold Fletcher nine arrangements including **Henderson Stomp** for a dozen hamburgers.

Louis became pretty dissatisfied because he got all the hard work, all the high stuff, and Joe Smith was the pet of both Fletcher and his wife. When he left we got Tommy Ladnier. He was a terrific soloist, but he couldn't read too well, and he had to go out and learn his parts. He was especially good on the low-down blues, I thought even better than Louis.

Fletcher's wife had been married to Russell Smith, and he taught her to play trumpet. He had the beautiful tone and was the first chair man. She used to play just like him, and whenever he was out for some reason, she used to do the first chair parts, and she did them well, too. She was in back of Fletcher in practically everything he ever did.

Around New York there were many good musicians then. When I first came to town, Johnny Dunn was the trumpet player. He was a terrific salesman for himself and he was the first one I knew to use any kind of mute. He'd set himself up in a show with just himself and dancers. His valet would come followed by all sorts of trunks, and I used to wonder if they were all for one man. The valet would set them up against the wall, and in them would be all kinds of pots and pans, flowerpots, cans, anything to get a different sound out of his horn. I think he was an influence on Duke because he really did get a lot of sounds out of his horn. In those days he used to be with pit bands, and nobody was featured from a pit band, but him. I don't think he was much of a musician technically. He later went overseas with Florence Mills and the "**Blackbirds**."

There was another guy around town called Brassfield who was a sensational sax player then. He couldn't read a thing, nothing. Nobody else could play his horn, and his mouthpiece would be on the horn so that it would be a half note out of tune. When he played it, it would be in tune. Everybody

used to marvel at him.

June Clark and Jimmy Harrison used to have a band uptown at Connor's on 135th Street, and all of us used to practically live in there. June was very good, but he couldn't read. They used to play some great jazz together. When Jimmy was in Fletcher's band later on, he was the best around.

Benny Carter's cousin, Cuban Bennett was another terrific trumpet player, and all he needed was a little more experience to really make it.

In those days nobody had the knack of picking out talent better than Chick Webb. He picked Johnny Hodges, Bobby Stark, John Trueheart, Don Kirkpatrick and of course, Ella, and many others.

I had gotten an offer from Bill McKinney to run his band for him, but since I was getting pretty good money from Fletcher and was well regarded, I decided not to take another offer until it was better than what I was getting then. We used to work the Graystone Ballroom in Detroit all the time, while McKinney was at the Arcadia and he would come over and tell me when he got in a position to make me the kind of offer I wanted, would I take the job? I told him I would.

When I joined the Cotton Pickers they were pretty much of a novelty outfit of around ten pieces. John Nesbitt, an exceptional trumpet player was doing all their arranging, and he knew his music, but he was copying everybody else's records. They had been known as the Synco Septette for years, ever since they built their reputation at the Green Mill in Toledo. I told Nesbitt to stop copying others work because he had enough ability to do his own stuff, and he eventually did turn out some fine things for the Cotton Pickers.

He loved Bix and used to play a lot like him in his own way. I'm thinking of doing one of his things this year, **Will You Won't You Be My Baby?**

The Cotton Pickers wasn't a solo band, but a unit. I was trying to get a sound and a style a little different than the other bands. Out in Detroit we really had that town sewed up and the people used to be wild over our stuff. The band became so popular at the Graystone that Jean Goldkette (who owned the Graystone and backed the band) wouldn't let me take all the men to New York with me when we got the offer from Victor to record. That's one of the reasons why there were so many different guys on those sessions.

While I was directing the Cotton Pickers we used to have Mondays off and I'd go to Chicago for some sessions with Louis Armstrong. He was featured with Carroll Dickerson's band at the Savoy Ballroom, and took a small group from the band to record for Okeh. At the same time I was doing some arranging on the

side for Ben Pollack's great band with Benny Goodman and Jimmy McPartland.

The Cotton Pickers were so popular that we battled bands all over the country. I first met Count Basie when we went to Kansas City and battled Bennie Moten at 15th and Paseo. That's when I first heard **Moten Swing**, which is nothing but the "go" chorus from **You're Driving Me Crazy**. They also used to do a terrific job on **I Want a Little Girl** and I'm surprised they never recorded it. They really had a fine band and they used to give us a lot of trouble.

We went to Hollywood to play Sebastian's Cotton Club after Louis in 1930. The first week there I thought we were dead ducks, and nobody could figure out why. We didn't begin to click until Sunday night when all the bands were off and the hotels were closed. The musicians packed the joint and really put us over. They told us that nobody had heard a band playing arrangements up until that time, and after that it was smooth sailing. We played to a packed house for seven weeks.

There had been a lot of dissension building up in the band, not among the musicians, but with management, which was McKinney and Charlie Horvath, the manager of the Graystone. The boys wanted a raise, because their name was a big attraction then, but they were turned down. On that trip to the coast the management brought the announcer from Detroit and his whole family and a couple of other guys and their families along on vacation paid for with Cotton Pickers' money. The guys in the band couldn't get a five dollar raise! That was it.

When we got back to Detroit, I got word that Tommy Rockwell and Sam Smith wanted me to take a band into Connie's Inn in New York. McKinney knew I was getting ready to leave and that I wanted to take some of his men with me. He told me I could take anyone I wanted except Cuba Austin and Billy Taylor the bass player. I picked Prince Robinson, Ed Cuffee, Ed Inge and Buddy Lee. They gave Cuffee and Prince a raise so they stayed on. I heard that Horace Henderson had a school band at Wilberforce that was very good but out of work, so I got to them and took six men plus Horace and got the band together.

I barely had the band organized when Irving Mills had gotten me a recording contract with Brunswick. Mills and Horvath were set to manage the band, but they were cut out when Rockwell took over. We rehearsed for two weeks and I didn't even have my trombone section set when we cut the first sides. Red Allen had to fill in for Sidney DeParis, because he was kind of temperamental and didn't show up for the date. Leonard Davis and Shirley Clay were with the band then, and so was Bennie Morton. Fred





Courtesy Andy Kirk

**McKinney's Cotton Pickers  
Detroit/1928.**

Left to right:

J. Hoxley, alto/Todd Rhodes, piano/  
Langston Curl, trumpet/Cuba Austin, drums,  
Prince Robinson, tenor/Ralph Escudero, tuba/  
Dave Wilborn, banjo and vocals/Claude Jones, trombone/  
George 'FatHead' Thomas, alto and vocals/  
John Nesbitt, trumpet and arranger/  
Don Redman, alto, clarinet, vocals, and  
arranger.

Robinson was also in the band but he quit after a while because he wasn't getting enough solo work. I thought Bennie was the best around in those days anyway.

We needed a singer and I was told to go around to the Rhythm Club because there were two guys there who were singing great. They turned out to be Harlan Lattimore and Orlando Robeson. I preferred Harlan because he had a deeper voice and was so handsome, and he was a fine performer. His idol was Bing Crosby and he used to sing like him. When Crosby heard him the first time, he changed his way of singing so that it would be closer to Harlan's. Claude Hopkins got Orlando and he was a big hit with him during the thirties.

Our records started doing very well, and I was doing a lot of writing, things like **Cherry, How'm I Doin'** and numbers like that. I never liked **How'm I Doin'** until I heard one of the singers in the show at Connie's Inn put it over big. Then the Mills Brothers recorded it and it sold very well. We were in Connie's Inn regularly for three or four years during the early thirties, and in 1932 were sponsored by Chipso in a package with the Mills Brothers. We were really hot then. We were on the air three and four times a week and the only time we went out was during the summer for a couple of months.

I'll never forget the night the Lindbergh baby was kidnapped. We were on the air from Connie's all night long, in between news flashes, until nine the next morning. We were really swinging. It's too bad someone couldn't have taken that down that night. Connie kept bringing us hot coffee and food and the place was jumping.

During those same years we made a short film for Warner Brothers with a racing background. It was called **Sweepstakes** and it won some kind of an award I believe.

We did a lot of travelling on the road and were almost always playing for white dances during the early years, and were considered a very commercial property then. We had a terrific band but I wasn't able to do the kind of jazz things I might have in

the places we were playing. This was true even on the road. I did get one of my best men while we were on the road, however, after many other leaders had tried for years.

Down in St. Louis there was a band called Johnson's Crackerjacks that really used to make us work every time we hit town. They had a pretty good outfit, but one man was really exceptional. That was Harold "Shorty" Baker. Duke, Fletcher, Andy Kirk and others had been trying to get him for years, but no one had been able to turn the trick, because of his older brother Winfield, who was a pretty poor trombone man. He told all the leaders if you wanted Harold you had to take him too, and nobody wanted that. One night he got pretty high and I got him outside after the dance and made him the offer, which he accepted. Some of the other guys who knew him said he'd never be there, but he was in time for the bus to leave the next morning and without his brother. He stayed with me until I reorganized the band in 1938.

Around 1937 we went under the Mills banner, although they never did much for us as far as records went. We started working the Savoy quite a bit around that time, but I was getting tired of the road. The excitement, the bright lights, the star billing, and all that I'd had, and I said, give me some money now. Actually I always liked to write, and liked that part of the business best anyhow. I wasn't even playing too much myself then, and I never did go too much for Don Redman's playing. I could play parts, pretty things, arrangements, but there were guys like Benny Carter around, and I never fooled myself thinking I could play jazz like they could.

I still had offers from many sources to take over bands and to organize new bands, but I wanted to concentrate on writing. In fact I turned down all kinds of offers. All the agencies would call and want me to go out on the road for them. They offered me very good money, but I didn't have anything ready, no repertoire, nothing.

I did go out a couple of times when Jay McShann came to town in 1942 and found the going tough after a while. They were getting ready to go back to Kansas City. I'd gotten an offer from the American Legion in Trenton for a two week stand which I had to turn down, until my manager told me about McShann's band being around and struggling. He said they were organized and a pretty good outfit. I took them out under my name and the first night on the job I told Jay to set up and play his own music, just like it was his own gig, and I'd just stand up in front of the band and direct and work with the people. I didn't pay them too much attention the first night, but on the following night

they played an up-tempo arrangement of **The Whistler and his Dog** and Charlie Parker took four choruses. That was it, I was sold. I told him to stay in New York even if the band did go back home, and he said he'd be glad to if I could find him a job. I told him to go into any of the joints and start playing his horn and he'd get all the jobs he wanted. He did stay when the band went west again, but he would have made it anyway, with his unusual talent. Later on I took McShann's band out for another month, this time to the Tic Toc in Boston. After that I kept pretty close to my writing, and sold arrangements to all the bands then.

I did take a band out again in 1943 and we went in the Cafe Zanzibar on Broadway and recorded a couple of sides for V-Disc, **Redman Blues**, **Pistol Packin' Mama** and things like that.

After the war I was the first leader to take a band overseas and we did terrific business all over Europe. We were supposed to have gone over before the war, but things prevented that, and the same agency arranged this tour. I took Tyree Glenn, Peanuts Holland, Don Byas, Billy Taylor and a lot of other fine musicians, and we recorded quite a lot while we were over there, both with the big band and with small groups. That was in 1946 and 1947. I've been freelancing ever since, then, with CBS and for many of the recording firms, and in the fifties I tied up with Pearl Bailey, and have been making all her arrangements and directing her orchestra ever since.

Most of the recordings I've made in the past year or so have been commercial things, for outfits like Sesac and groups like that. They all liked what I did for them, and I managed to get Hawk, Charlie Shavers and guys like that in on the sessions.

I haven't signed with anyone yet, because I want a free hand in composing and arranging, and most of the companies all have their things they want you to do. There's so much talent in town today that anyone ought to be able to make good records, but not too much of what's on the market is good.

Some of the younger musicians who are being recorded so much today just don't have the experience behind them to make good records. Look at a guy as great as Hawk is, he didn't really hit his stride until he was ready to go overseas in the middle thirties, and by that time he'd already been in the business for close to ten years.

I'm planning to do some remakes of some of the best things I did, like **Cherry**, **Milenburg Joys**, **Try Getting a Good Night's Sleep** and things like that. I think there's a market for them, and the public is going to want the big bands back pretty soon anyway.

# THE STYLE OF JOHN COLTRANE

ZITA CARNO



There are a number of devices which Coltrane employs in building a solo which are by no means obvious, and which would take repeated hearings to spot. But once you know what they are, you will be able to understand more fully just how he goes about it.

One of them—and it shows up at once on **Blue Train**—is his little trick of building up on a single note (as in this case) or a short phrase, then taking off from there. It is personal with him, like so many of the things he does.

Another is his wonderful use of sequences—which I mentioned earlier in the end of his solo on **Bass Blues** wherein he employs one of his pet phrases this way. Another excellent illustration is his tag on **Locomotion**: (Example 6)

## PART 2

Example 6. LOCOMOTION



Coltrane has a way of starting his solos in the least expected places. What is more, he never does anything exactly the same way twice. He also has a peculiarly individual way of altering the phrasing, unlike anything ever heard before. It is almost impossible to describe it, but if you look back at Example 1b, in part one of this article, you will see something of it. It involves an extremely subtle shifting of accentuation (you'll see this also in Examples 2b, 4 and 5, as well as in the solo on **Blue Train**), which results in previous often a-rhythmic phrasing that will throw the unwary listener off the track.

At this point I am going to do what I said I'd do earlier—quote Coltrane's complete recorded solo on **Blue Train**, inasmuch as it is a perfect example of so many of the previously mentioned aspects of his

style and a good blues solo.

The tune itself is a revealing sample of Coltrane's writing, being as direct and straightforward as his playing, and offering a tremendous insight into his overall conception. It is a most powerful blues line, brooding, mysterious, almost like an eerie chant; someone has remarked that it is more than just a blues, that it has other meanings in it. This is true of everything he does.

There are some unusual things about this solo.

For one thing, this recording was done during his tenure with Thelonious Monk, and here and there are isolated flashes of certain aspects of his current work—sort of a preview of things to come, as it were. I refer particularly to the "sheets of sound," which, it is interesting to note, is a spontaneous development.

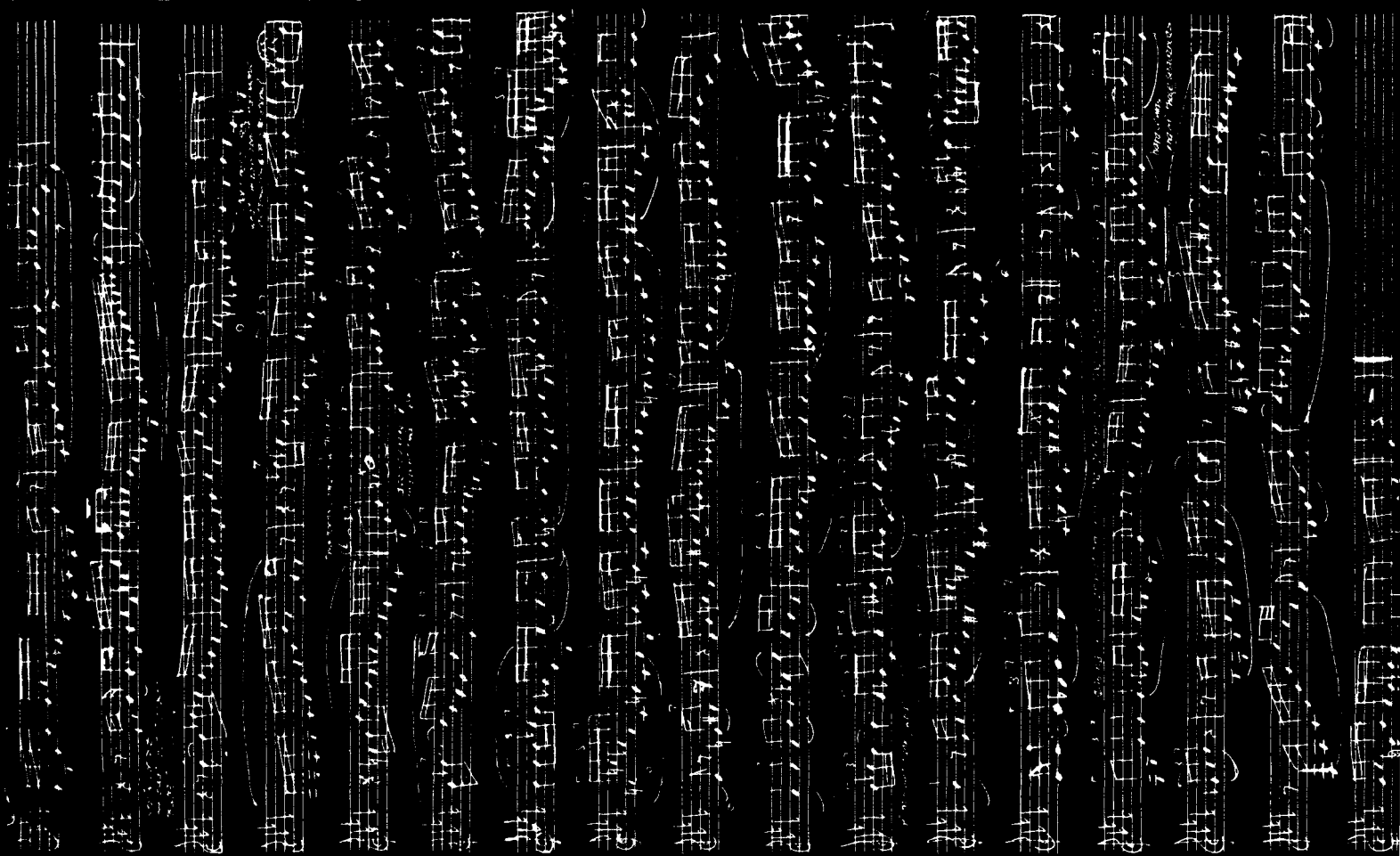
Example 7. BLUE TRAIN

This solo continues to build up all the way to the last chorus. It reaches its peak at the sixth chorus, where the other two horns come in with a riff (Example 7a) which repeats six times, and adds even more impetus. This constant building-up is a most striking feature of Coltrane's work, and has been apparent even from his earliest days with Miles Davis. Then, too, notice how he tends to stay in the high register of his horn. Well, he can be justly proud of that register. It is strong, clear and—in his hands—full of a terrific emotional impact.

He does one thing that is unusual in that it is difficult to do well: he slurs those long phrases all the way and plays them so clearly. There is ample evidence of how solid his technique is—that fluid, unerring finger action.

Lest you think that Coltrane's playing consists of

cooking and more cooking, I'd like to say a few words about the way he handles slower tempos. I mentioned earlier in discussing various aspects of his technique, his fantastic control which enables him to play a ballad without having to double-time on it. But that control isn't all. Except for the fact that he is more intense, his ballad concept could be likened to that of Miles Davis. He has the same straightforward, thoughtful approach. And I'm not just talking about the classic **'Round Midnight** he did with Miles; there are plenty of other tracks which provide a fine demonstration of this kind of lyricism: his unusual interpretation of the seldom-done standard **While My Lady Sleeps**, for instance, or **Slow Dance**, to give two examples. They are object lessons in how to play a ballad without unnecessary "cooking."



That is Coltrane the instrumentalist—powerful, sensitive, ahead, and always experimenting. Now I'd like to talk a bit about Coltrane the jazz composer and arranger, inasmuch as it may throw still further light on certain other aspects of his conception.

Coltrane's writing may not be quite as familiar as his playing, except to his most avid followers. He is, like Horace Silver and Benny Golson, always experimenting with different structures and unusual chord progressions—but his writing is easily distinguishable from that of the other two.

For one thing, his melodic lines—blues or not—are all very powerful, direct and straightforward, with strong emotional impact. When he gets "funky" (the theme of **Blue Train** is a perfect example) it is, as I said earlier, hard, driving, intense—not like any other kind. Even **John Paul Jones**, which he com-

posed a few years ago, could never be taken for a line by someone like Horace Silver, despite the fact that it is slower and more relaxed. (Example 8)

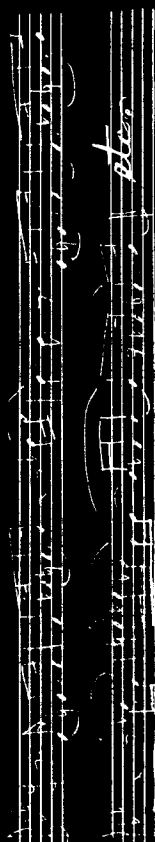
Among other tunes of this kind is one called **Straight Street**, which, although based on twelve-bar phrases, could never be mistaken for a blues. (Example 9)

The chord progression, by the way, is a characteristic one. If you look closely, you will notice that it is the old familiar II-V changes—with a twist not instantly noticeable. Of course, you know that it's this II-V business, because I told you so, and there it is in front of you. But if you were listening to it for the first time, you might notice only that the changes **seem** out of the ordinary. Coltrane handles this so cleverly that you don't realize just what it is. Another example of this occurs in **Moment's Notice**. Example 10 gives part of the introduction.

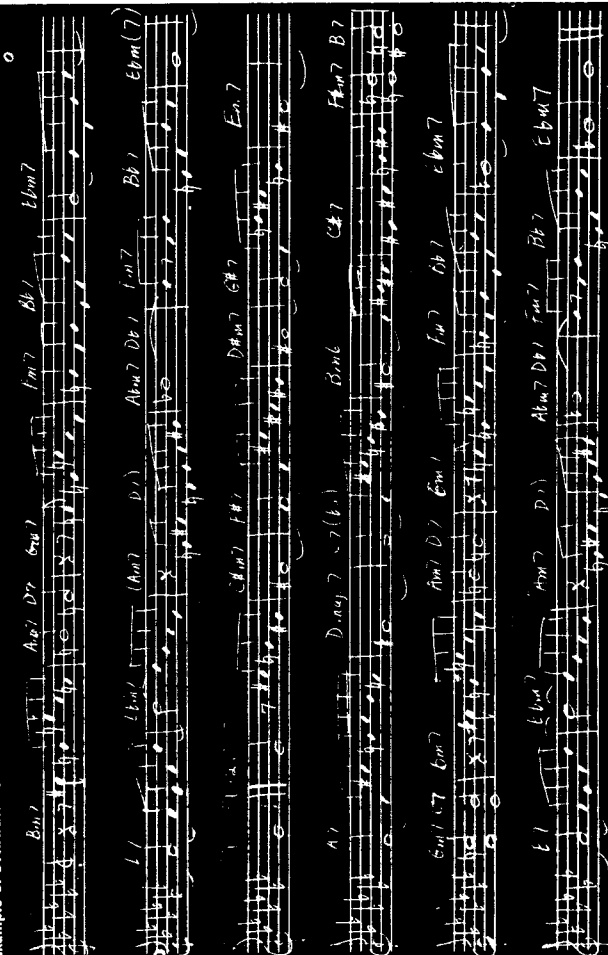
Example 7a.



Example 8. JOHN PAUL JONES



Example 9. STRAIGHT STREET



Example 10. MOMENT'S NOTICE





The deceptiveness that is part and parcel of Coltrane's writing also shows up in his blues **Locomotion**. The structure of this tune is not too unusual: 12-12-8-12 blues is now almost standard on the East Coast. But even here he has a little twist: he has each succeeding soloist take an unaccompanied eight-bar break before going into his solo.

But it is the rhythm of that eight-bar riff in the line itself that is really confusing. (Example 11) You hear it on the recording, and it sounds as if the accented E-flat were on the first beat of the measure. As you can see, it isn't. (I was thrown off by it on the first couple of hearings, and I'm supposed to have a good ear!)

His approach to arranging is just as different as everything else he does. Very often what he does amounts to an almost complete reharmonization or

reconstruction of a tune or part of it, and right there you get another view of his harmonic conception.

For instance, the first few bars of his arrangement of **While My Lady Sleeps**. (Example 12)

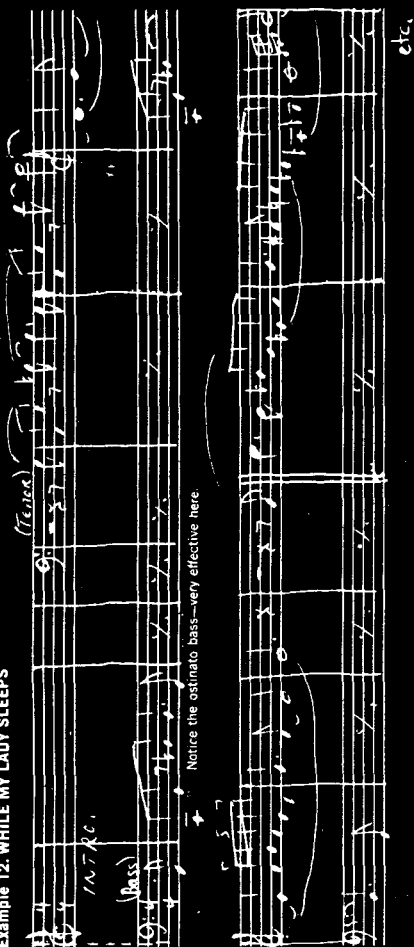
Another illustration of the reconstructive process he uses can be seen in what he does to the familiar Latin-beat introduction so often played on **Star Eyes**. (Example 13)

As I said in the first part of this series, the only thing to expect from John Coltrane is the unexpected.

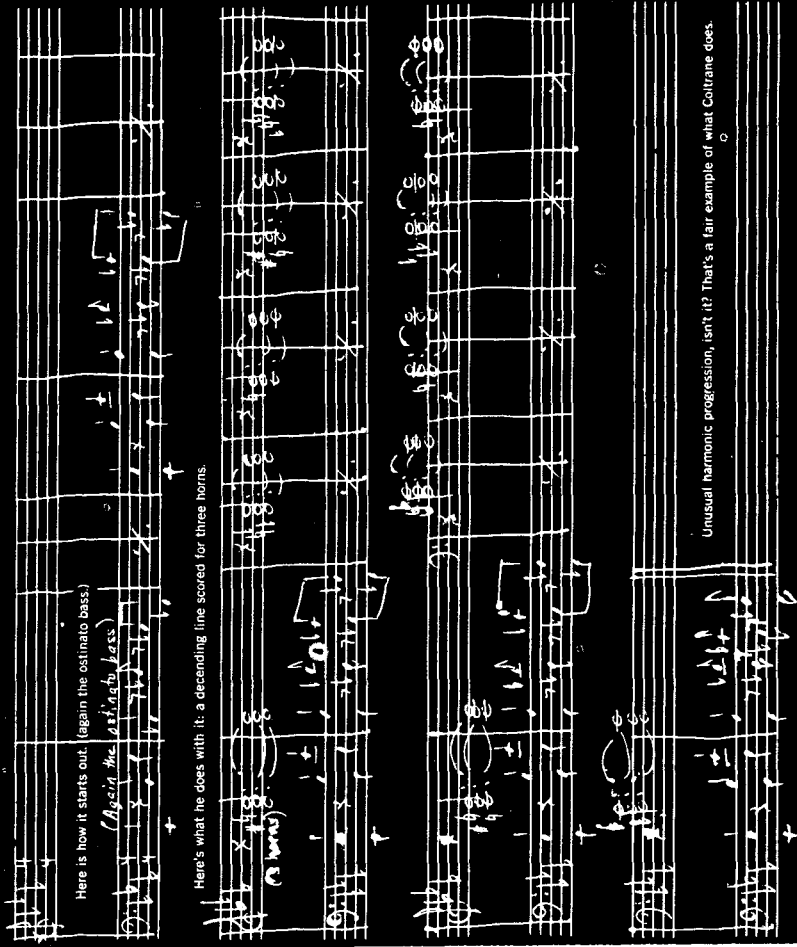
Example 11. LOCOMOTION



Example 12. WHILE MY LADY SLEEPS



Example 13. Intro to STAR EYES



# muddy waters

Rollingfork is a small extremely poor Negro community on Deer Creek in the southernmost part of Mississippi. There, on April 4th, 1915, McKinley Morganfield was born, the second son of Ollie Morgenfield and Berta Jones. Berta Jones died when McKinley was three, and he was taken to Clarksdale in northern Mississippi to live with his grandmother, Della Jones. He grew up and went to school there, and only occasionally returned to Rollingfork to visit his father. As he grew older, he went to work on the Coahoma County plantations, but through the influence of his father—Ollie Morgenfield played the guitar and sang the blues as did many of his friends—he had already started as a musician.

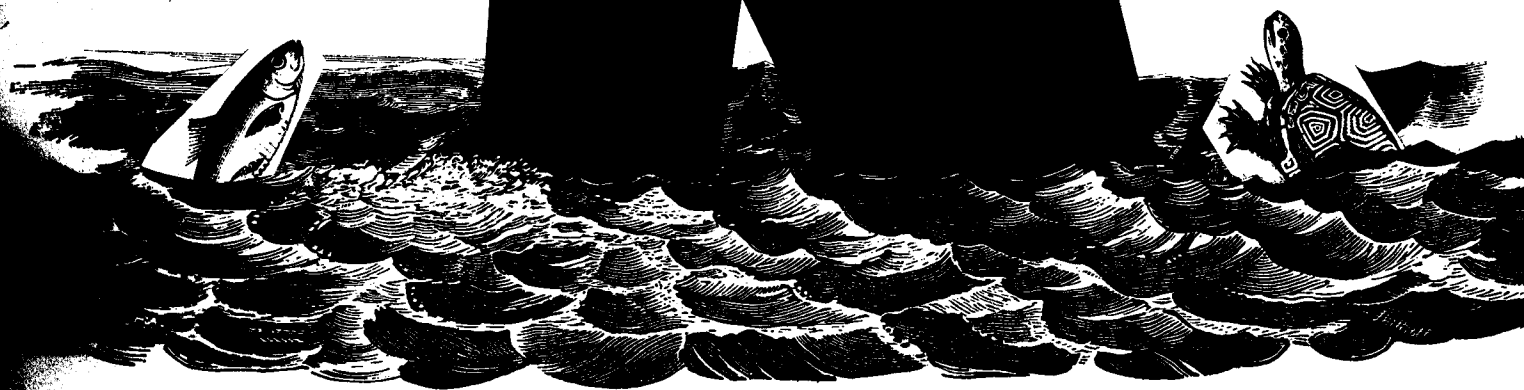
The first instrument McKinley learned to play was the harmonica, and in Stovall, just outside Clarksdale, where he now lived, he was playing in a group which consisted of himself, his two friends, Scott Bowhandle and Sonny Simms (guitar and violin) and Lewis Fuller on mandolin. This was a typical Negro string band, and the music, strong with traditional patterning, probably sounded very much like the earlier jug bands, with harmonica, mandolin and violin embroidering above the ground base set by the guitar.

The country string bands of this period—late 1920's to mid-1930's—often possessed an almost baroque flavour, with the rhythmic emphasis on the first and third beat of the bar over which melody instruments played delicately phrased patterns, deriving largely from 'educated' Creole sources. I use the word 'baroque', in this instance, to describe an atmosphere strongly linked with the music of eighteenth century northern Europe since it was this delicate formal idiom which was brought to Louisiana.

In time it spread, largely through the agency of the more socially acceptable Creoles of New Orleans. Formalism is, in any event, an important aspect of American Negro folkmusic, with improvisation, excepting in certain forms of jazz, playing a secondary role. In fact, this particular form of blues could be described as a type of Negro-Creole chamber music, unhappily short-lived. By about 1933 it was almost dead.

This was the music McKinley Morganfield was playing at local dances and it was quite opposite to his present day style. But McKinley was fortunate in his early removal to Clarksdale, for here in the

Phil Featheringill



northern Mississippi area, were a number of extremely fine blues singers.

A country singer in those days had to be a musician, an entertainer and a human newspaper—there is an obvious parallel with the earlier European Minnesingers and the present day folksinger-musicians of Roumania. The country singer had to find some personal means of expression without moving outside the idiom of the blues. It was only within these limits that his value could be absolute. Fortunately, several outstanding singers in the pure blues tradition, frequented the Clarksdale area, among them Son House, Charlie Patton, Son Bonds, Kokomo Arnold and Robert Johnson.

These men all played guitar using a northern Mississippi 'bottleneck' style for many of their accompaniments. In this style of playing the guitar may be tuned normally (E,A,D,G,B,E) or to an open D Major chord (D,A,D,F,A,D)<sup>1</sup>. The strings, instead of being pressed down with the left hand fingers, are played with the aid of a bottle neck—the rough edges first smoothed over—or a piece of brass tubing worn on the little finger of the left hand. When this is passed up and down the strings, a whining note is produced and a comparatively heavy vibrato is obtained by moving the slide very slightly over any one given fret. The really fine players of this style<sup>2</sup> could control the pitch and tone of the notes to produce an almost perfect match with the voice, especially when singing in the falsetto register. And when Morganfield really started to play the guitar, it was in the "bottle-neck" style with the D Tuning.

He listened to all these good singers whenever they were to be heard but the man who made the greatest impression upon him was Robert Johnson.

Alan Lomax considers Johnson to have been one of the greatest men in blues and, though not in complete agreement with this assessment, I feel that he is a fine example of a country blues singer and player. Able to pick (normal tuning) or slide (D tuning) with equal facility, Johnson had a masterly instrumental technique which was perfectly suited to his high tenor voice; his falsetto was one of the finest ever recorded in the blues. Johnson, from

whom young McKinley Morganfield learned much by watching and listening, was a true wanderer, and he never stayed long in one place. Within a short time he was recording at San Antonio, Texas, and McKinley was to see no more of him. But, today, Muddy still plays Robert Johnson phrases when he works over songs in private and, unlike many other singer-guitarists, is pleased when this source is recognised by occasional listeners.

More violent than Johnson's in style, Muddy's guitar always lacked finesse and dexterity, tending toward more obviously robust patterns. Without Johnson's amazing timing, McKinley nonetheless succeeded in producing a vital rhythmic accompaniment which embodied all that he could manage of Robert Johnson's "bottle-neck" technique and phrasing. And, while McKinley copied, he also changed, for the times were changing and music was becoming less subtle, less formal, less precise, more jagged.

In 1941 Alan Lomax came to Stovall in search of Robert Johnson, to record him and bring him to public attention. He came to Stovall to find that Robert Johnson had wandered to Texas some five years before and had supposedly died, poisoned by a mistress. But the people in Stovall told him of a fine singer who had modelled himself on Robert Johnson, and Lomax decided that he should at least hear him. When he had, he immediately recorded him and, on Library of Congress (Nos. AAFS 18/AB—78rpm.; No. AAFS L4—33 $\frac{1}{4}$ rpm.) are transcribed McKinley Morganfield's first recordings: **Country Blues** and **I Be's Troubled**.

**Country Blues** is, in fact, Waters' version of Johnson's **Walkin' Blues**, and the guitar playing is almost identical to that on Johnson's version. But while Johnson's singing was phrased with intentional irregularity, with sudden swoops into falsetto, Muddy phrased in more predictable patterns and used falsetto sparingly, rarely for more than one bar at a time. **I Be's Troubled** is also a twelve-bar blues on the normal progression, but where **Country Blues** is a slow blues with the words sung at double tempo over a lurching 2/4 accompaniment, here the melody rides at half tempo over a fast 4/4 rhythm. And the accent is on the first and third beats, while it is on the second and fourth beats in **Country Blues**. This kind of shift in emphasis was, of course, essential for a performer who might have to play seven hours at a stretch for a dance or party. **I Be's Troubled** has also been re-recorded by Muddy since 1941; one particularly good version is under the title **I Can't Be Satisfied**.

In the winter of 1942-3, Muddy moved to Chicago,

- (1). The D Tuning is often referred to as 'Vastopol' Tuning. This is a corruption of 'Sebastopol' and, we are told, comes from the balalaika tuning brought to New Orleans by Russian emigres in the early part of the 19th century.
- (2). This style is not peculiar to the Northern Mississippi region. It was fairly generally used and Texas, for instance, produced some fine 'bottle-neck' musicians of whom Ramblin' Thomas is a typical example.

where he worked in a paper mill during the day time and played in the evenings at parties or sessions. Very slowly, for Chicago boasted a quantity of fine singers and musicians, he began to make a reputation, and he gained much experience working with established singers. Muddy has always been extremely proud of his association with Sonny Boy Williamson, the singer and harmonica player, and his performance of **Standing Around Crying**<sup>3</sup> is a tribute to the influence which Williams has exercised on many singers since the 1940's. Here Muddy uses Williamson's trick of stammering a word, holding back a phrase until it is almost too late to get it into the meter, then spitting it out<sup>4</sup>. Muddy became known for his singing, and recording sessions followed.

Major influences on Muddy also included the sounds of Chicago blues piano playing and his introduction to the electric guitar. He realised that, to feel right, he would eventually require piano in his group. With his early love for the harmonica confirmed by the virtuosity of Sonny Boy Williamson, Muddy decided that it must become part of his 'sound'. So he started working with Little Walter, a fellow southerner and an excellent technician whose style was based on that of the great Williamson. He later brought in Otis Spann, his cousin—one of the finest blues pianists to be heard today—to fill out the group; but Muddy's early commercial recordings were made with guitar, bass, occasionally drums or washboard, and harmonica. The guitar-harmonica accompaniment, played in unison, is extremely effective behind Muddy's voice, the bass and washboard play a backing mainly in double time. The best of these recordings, I feel, is **Louisiana Blues**, a thirteen and a half or fourteen bar blues. Muddy's singing is already changing.

There is no doubt that Muddy has suffered in recent years from the obsessive echo which has been used on his recordings, and has seriously distorted both his voice and the groups accompanying him. It has affected his style: the patrons of a club go to hear their idols as they have heard them on records, and so Muddy has tended to coarsen his delivery to keep up with his records.

(3). THE BEST OF MUDDY WATERS. Chess lp 1427.

(4). Sonny Boy Williamson actually had an impediment of speech, on occasion, caused him to mumble or stammer lyrics of his songs.

(5). For fuller details of Muddy's early sessions and how they occurred, refer to Paul Oliver's informative article in the January, 1959 issue of **Jazz Monthly**.

(6). THE BEST OF MUDDY WATERS. Chess lp 1427.

But when one sees Muddy one also realizes a second reason for the modification of his singing style; it is his constant physical movement.

As he relied more on Otis and Little Walter as accompanists and less on his own guitar playing, he introduced more dance movement into his stage presentation with striking visual impact. And inevitably, since one cannot produce the same tones standing on one leg with the diaphragm tightly contracted, his singing became less classical. Some tones were chopped off short, others extended, and the whole musical effect became more violent and eccentric.

When Muddy sings one of the older blues such as **Blues Before Sunrise** or **Turn Your Lamp Down Low**, one can hear, immediately, that much of his earlier style remains. It is only when one hears him singing these older blues that one understands fully Bill Broonzy's very high regard for Muddy, a regard which is increased by the realization of Muddy's considerable interest in the work of older singers.

But if Muddy's delivery has changed, so have his lyrics. Always an individualist, Muddy has tended to write his own blues rather than sing other people's and, in this respect, his stay in Chicago seems to have been most beneficial. With his diction becoming clearer there has been a heavier emphasis placed upon the words and many of Muddy's present day songs contain verses of outstanding poetic character and expressiveness. These qualities are all too rare in the blues-rock market.

**Hoochie Coochie**, (printed on the **Blues** page) is one of Muddy's best recordings since the Library of Congress sides. And in **Still a Fool**—a new version of his **Rolling Stone Blues**—Muddy starts with this verse.

"Well now, there's two, two trains runnin'

And neither of them goin' my way.

Well now, one runs at midnight

And the other just before day."

The effect, direct yet mysterious, is extraordinarily powerful and a good example of Muddy's great strength in the blues: his lyrics. Whenever I have heard him sing in private, I have been impressed by the power and vividness of his imagery.

Muddy Waters has great personal dignity, great masculinity and he believes intensely in his work. He has not bettered the blues, he has only changed them to suit the times. As I once heard him remark to Otis Spann—he was listening to a 1932 recording of Bill Broonzy—"You see, Otis, they didn't need a rhythm section then. Just one man, by himself, he could swing like a whole group."



## INTRODUCING WAYNE SHORTER

I knew Wayne Shorter first in Newark where we were both, malevolently, born. He was one of the two 'weird' Shorter brothers that people mentioned occasionally, usually as a metaphorical reference, "... as weird as Wayne." Wayne and I never ran together, or got on very intimate terms; we lived in distant parts of the city, went to different schools.

Wayne went to Newark's Arts High School. I used to see him in the too-tight green and grey band uniform, tootling on a silver horn. Or meet him on High Street always 'clean,' rather distant, and smiling, what I've come to know as a really 'secret' smile. He was playing tenor with a young group at most of the high school crowd's dances throughout the city. The band was Nat Phipps', and I wish some one had recorded them. All 15, 16, 17, they played, then, with a mature musicianship that would, I'm afraid, make the Farmingdale High School band sound dreary. (The Phipps band, by the way, still plays around Newark, and still has several very good musicians.)

Wayne was precocious; I heard many pretty astounding things he was doing at 17 and 18. Even then, when he couldn't do anything else, he could still make you gasp at sheer technical infallability. That was when almost every young body playing any kind of an instrument, even bongo players, sounded like Charlie Parker. Wayne did too. But even as a Bird lover in a high school band, Wayne managed to come up with power. I remember telling somebody, "Well, that's the hippest imitation of Parker you'll ever hear." Nowadays, Charlie Parker's got nothing to do with Wayne, except, perhaps, in the sense that Antonio Stradivari is an 'influence' on Franscescatti.

When I got out of Newark permanently, after college, I heard about Wayne occasionally.

Usually, talking over old times with old cronies just out of their teens, and mentioning, almost wet-eyed, 'You remember how Wayne Shorter used to play those fantastic solos at The Masonic Temple?', tapping on the table in a tempo so fast, Wayne would probably still have trouble making it. But that's a sense of it; the kind of aura he cast even as an adolescent, maybe because we were all adolescents . . . but I think not. I think Wayne carries that aura around him like an expensive Chesterfield. Talking to him one senses immediately this air of 'invincibility.' Hearing him play, one is convinced it is no mere air.

Wayne went to N.Y.U. and graduated with a degree in Music Education. But all during this time, he was still playing with the Phipps band, and staying over in New York playing at sessions with the bigtimers. It was at one of these sessions that he met John Coltrane and they became very close friends. It was also during this time that Coltrane had just gone with Miles Davis. John talked and played, Wayne listened and also played.

After school, Wayne played around for a while, and then, due largely to a session he was in at a Newark spot called Sugar Hill, was taken into the Horace Silver group. Wayne made a few dates with them, including Birdland and Newport in 1956, but then the army got him. Luckily, he managed to get into the Fort Dix band, and stay there. He came to New York every weekend, making sessions, and getting heard. He got out of the army late last year, and in his brother Allen's words, "Man, he went to the army and took care of a lot of business." Wayne started writing, practiced a lot, and most of all, came out of it his own man, playing his horn like **nobody else** around. He had passed through two very critical stages of his life: the young precocious imitator of Bird, and the 'good' young session musician whose ideas have not quite jelled. He is, now, almost at that third even more critical stage of his career: the Innovator. He still has a little way to go, but not so much as to make anyone who's heard him, recently, doubt for a second that he'll make it.

I'd say Wayne's style is linked to the two



Wayne Shorter

Don Silverstein

major tenor saxophonists of our day: Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane. From Rollins, he has learned what proper utilization of 'space' (rests, doubletimes, "running through" bar lines, etc.) can do in improvisation. Like Rollins's, his solos are orderly and precise, but, watching Wayne play, both eyes tight shut, smiling during his short breaks, it is obvious that the only chart he uses is somewhere behind his eyes. But Rollins seems to stand, like Joyce, above and beyond his work, paring his nails, Wayne and Coltrane are right in the middle of the music, broil-

ing up at you with what seems to be a fantastic emotional thrust, but never railing, or waving their arms meaninglessly.

But Wayne's music (the playing, the compositions) is unique, and seems, above all, important. The playing is characterized by an almost 'literary' (in the best sense of the word) arrangement of musical relationships. Everything that comes out of the horn seems not only "premeditated" (the fire and surprise of instantaneous extemporization is always present), but definite, and assimilated . . . no matter how wild or unlikely it

might sound at first. He seems to be willing to try anything. He usually makes it.

When I started this piece, Wayne was playing tenor with Maynard Ferguson's big band, but since he has gone into Art Blakey's Messengers. The night I went up to see Wayne with the Fergusons I talked to Wayne after each of three sets, wanting to get his voice in this article.

"Well, of course, you don't get as many solos as you'd like, but a lot of times things happen in a small group, and besides, we've got a few people in this thing who really cook. Slide Hampton, the trombone player, he writes some fine things. We'll probably play some of Slide's things later. You know, I've got a few tunes in the book too."

"What it comes to is seriousness! Nothing comes to anything unless you're serious about it. Man, that's the only things I dig . . . serious people doing serious things . . . otherwise, there's not much to it. Of course, there's such a thing as serious humour too. You know? Like Monk. Man, that cat's jokes are dead serious! To me, that's what people like Sonny and John represent, a really serious approach to music. And with people that are constantly improvising, you can see the real accomplishment. It's amazing! At least, it amazes me. John especially. I mean, he doesn't ever stop taking care of business."

"What about traditional jazz musicians? Have you ever listened to Jelly Roll Morton or Louis or early Duke, with a conscious desire to incorporate their approaches?"

"Well, no. Although I've listened to a lot of traditional people, especially Louis and Duke, and may have gotten a couple of things they were doing, unconsciously, but I can just about feel what they were doing without having to play that way myself to find out. You know, what Bird played came right through, and from everybody. Everybody who's saying anything plays like they've heard everybody. I'd like to make a record of Monk tunes, and one of Tad Dameron's tunes. Of course, Monk's are greater, but Tad did a lot of things that help all composers out. But, Monk, Whew!"

"Well, if you do a record of Monk's tunes, I wish you'd do some of those great things nobody does because they're so tough to do, **Four-In-One, Humph**, things like that."

"You said it, man. Everybody's afraid of those tunes." He laughed, "I don't blame 'em either."

"You know, when you're into something . . . like John, you may make a lot of fluffs and clinkers . . . but that's in it too. All that stuff counts. If you're really doing something, you can't be safe . . . you've just got to blow . . . and try to take care of some kind of business (smiles) some way. Gee, I hope we play those tunes of Slide's and mine this set. I feel like playing something."

"Does Maynard take requests?"

"Yeh, sure . . . he goes for that. You know, like you're a fan!"

"O.K.", what tunes shall I ask for?"

"Well, the best of Slide's tunes is called **Newport**; mine is **Nellie Bly**."

After **Oleo**, the band went off into Slide Hampton's **Newport**, swinging, lush, brassy. Halfway through the tune, Wayne got up to solo; after his first few notes, it was apparent to almost everyone in Birdland that the young man playing was the most exciting thing that had happened all night. The only thing wrong with the solo was that it was too short. Taken at a seemingly impossible double-timed tempo, it still was full of the kind of fierce, certainly satirical, humour that characterizes a Monk or a Rollins. When Wayne finished the solo, most of the Birdland patrons broke into a loud happy applause. The minute the band went into Wayne's **Nellie Bly**, a thirties hipster type behind me called out excitedly "Oh, oh . . . some of that uptown stuff." He started popping his fingers vociferously. Wayne's solo, this time, was even better. Half the solo at double-time tempo. The fellows in the band broke up. The coda was supposed to be a unison thing with Wayne and Ferguson, but Ferguson fluffed so badly, Wayne reared back on his haunches and blew a long, long, sustained, Ammons-like "honk," throughout the entire passage. The old timer in back of me fell out of his chair.

I walked towards the subway with the old man in pursuit. "You know," he said, "You can tell the bosses right away and that boy's sure one of 'em."

I agreed happily and he shook my hand warmly as we parted, taking "A" trains north and south.

# **THE BLUES**

## **FIXIN' TO DIE BLUES**

I'm lookin' fire in my eyes and I believe I'm fixin' to die,  
Believe I'm fixin' to die,  
I'm lookin' fire in my eyes and I believe I'm fixin' to die,  
I know I was born to die but I ain't goin' to leave my children cryin'  
Just as sure as we live everyday, sure we're born to die,  
Sure we're born to die,  
Just as sure as we live, sure we're born to die,  
I know I was born to die but I ain't goin' to leave my children cryin'  
Your mother treated me, children, like I was her baby child,  
Was her baby child,  
Your mother treated me, children, like I was her baby child,  
That's why I tried so hard and come back home to die  
So many nights at the fireside, how my children's mother would cry,  
How my children's mother would cry,  
So many nights at the fireside, how my children's mother would cry,  
'Cos I ain't told their mother I had to say goodbye  
Look over yonder, on the buryin' ground,  
On the buryin' ground,  
Look over yonder, on the buryin' ground,  
Yonder stand ten thousand, standing to see them let me down  
Mother, take my children back, before they let me down,  
Before they let me down,  
Mother, take my children back, before they let me down,  
Ain't no use them screamin' and cryin' on that graveyard ground

(By Bukka White on Okeh 05588. Transcribed by Alexis Korner.)

## **HOOCHIE COOCHIE**

The gypsy woman told my mother  
Before I was born  
I got a boy child's comin'  
Gonna be a son of a gun.  
He's gonna make pretty womens  
Jump and shout  
Then the world gonna know  
What this all about.  
Cause you know I'm here  
Everybody knows I'm here  
Well, you know I'm a Hoochie Coochie Man  
Everybody knows I'm here.  
I got a black cat's bone  
I got a mojo tooth  
I got the John the Conqueror  
I'm gonna mess with you.  
I'm gonna make you girls  
Lead me by the hand  
Then the world will know  
The Hoochie Coochie Man.

Cause you know I'm here  
Everybody knows I'm here  
Well, you know I'm a Hoochie Coochie Man  
Everybody knows I'm here.  
On the seven hours  
On the seven day  
On the seven month  
The seven doctors say  
He was born for good luck  
And that you'll see.  
I got seven hundred dollar  
Don't you mess with me.  
But you know I'm here  
Everybody knows I'm here  
Well, you know I'm a Hoochie Coochie Man  
Everybody knows I'm here.

(By McKinley Morganfield [Muddy Waters]  
on Chess LP 1427.

Transcribed by Pete Welding.)

This is the second of a series of articles by Mr. Borneman. The first appeared in September.

## CREOLE ECHOES

### PART II

ERNEST BORNEMAN

There is a vast literature describing the Place Congo [New Orleans] songs and dances, but perhaps the best record of them that we have is the extraordinary music composed in the 1840s by Louis Moreau Gottschalk, son of a German cotton broker and a Creole mother, who transcribed much of what he heard at the Place Congo into an idiom which is formally European but shows an unusual gift for transcribing African cross-rhythms into conventional notation.

Of his many works, *La Bamboula, Danse Nègre, Op. 2*, and *Le Bananier, Chanson Nègre, Op. 5*, are perhaps the most impressive. How honestly he preserved his source material can be judged from the fact that at least one of his themes, *Quand patate cuite na va mangé li*, survives up to the present day in New Orleans in almost unchanged form.

What these transcriptions establish is three things: the existence of a mature form based on African rhythm, African call-and-response structure, and Franco-Spanish tunes; a melodic profile almost identical with that of Creole jazz; the recurrence of a metrical scheme reminiscent of the Moorish elements in flamenco.

In 1886, George Washington Cable published two books—*Creole Slave Songs* and *The Dance in the Place Congo*, with musical transcriptions by Mary L. Bartlett, H. E. Krehbiel, Mme. Louis Lejeune and John A. van Broekhoven. Krehbiel's transcriptions are the best of these: they show how very accurate Louis Moreau's ear and pen had been forty years earlier. Once again we find the rudiments of Creole jazz in unmistakable form, and once again we note the extraordinary resemblance to the music of Martinique, Guadeloupe, Santo Domingo and Trinidad. Here is the source material of such jazz tunes as *Salée dame*, *Eh la bas*, *Moi pas l'aimé ca*, *Ce monsieur qui parle*, *Les Oignons*, *C'est l'autre Cancan*, and *Creole Bobo*. But though the Creole songs of the 1840-1880 era were essentially French in melody, the Creole dances of the same period showed a

surprisingly Spanish flavor. Some, in fact, are so reminiscent of today's so-called Afro-Cuban music that they could probably be taken over into the repertoire of the Machito band without causing raised eyebrows in Puerto Rican Harlem.

These dances—the *counjaille*, *bamboula*, *chacta*, *babouille* and *juba*—must have had an influence on early jazz. There are no recorded samples of them, but it is significant that the early jazz themes have a much more "Spanish" flavor than the later ones. Jelly Roll Morton's *New Orleans Blues*, based on a Creole song that Jelly heard in 1902, is of course the most famous case in point. Other Jelly Roll tunes that breathe the same atmosphere are *Mama 'Nita*, *Spanish Swat*, *Fickle Fay Creep*, *Creepy Feeling*, *The Crave* and his adaptations of *La Paloma* and *Tia Juana*.

Even Jelly's lifelong enemy, W. C. Handy, agrees that all the early Southern blues had a markedly "Spanish" flavor. Handy himself, of course, reproduced this most accurately in *Memphis Blues* (1912) and *St. Louis Blues* (1914). Note that Louis Armstrong, though not a Creole himself, invariably plays *St. Louis Blues* with a Creole beat.

Another Negro writer of the period whose ears were particularly well tuned to the sound of Creole folk-music was William H. Tyers, a West Indian. His *Trocha* (1897), *Maori* (1908) and *Panama* (1911) follow directly in the tradition of Louis Moreau and the anonymous songs preserved by G. W. Cable. Certainly the Creole influence runs right through the ragtime idiom, from Jesse Pickett's *Bowdigh's Dream* in 1898, through Fred Mack's *Coon-jine* (*counjaille*) the same year and Louis Chauvin's *Babe, It's Too Long* in 1906, to Scott Joplin's *Heliotrope Bouquet* (1907—based on a Chauvin tune—and Chauvin was Creole), *You're in the Right Church But the Wrong Pew* (Cecil Mack and Chris Smith, 1908), Scott Joplin's *Solace Rag* (1909), E. J. Stark's *Chicken Tango* and Paul Pratt's *Everybody Tango* (both 1914), Fred Fisher's and Felix Bernard's *Dardanella* (1919), Lucky Robert's *Spanish Venus* (1923) and the famous *Charleston* the same year.

Note that Cecil Mack, who wrote *The Charleston* with Jimmie Johnson, had been using the same kind of "Spanish bass" in his own *You're in the Right Church* fifteen years earlier. Note also that many of the early records by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band (which borrowed its themes and phrasing from Creole jazz) showed the same beat, in particular *Oriental Jazz* (1917), *At the Jazz Band Ball* (1918), *Fidgety Feet* (1919), *Sphinx*, *Sudan* and *Palesteena* (1921). The earliest Negro jazz on record—particularly *Indianola* and *Arabian Nights* by Jim Europe's Hellfighters—exhibits similar "Spanish" phrasing. These records were made in 1919,



four years before the first King Oliver discs, and demonstrate conclusively what was further documented in 1924 by Piron's **West Indies Blues** and in 1925 by the Jim Dandies' **Geechee Dance**.

When the jazzmen moved north, they lost touch with Creole music—which, of course, simply means African music filtered through Spain and France—and started playing Tin Pan Alley tunes. In fact, almost nowhere except in the blues did a flavor of pre-Bolden jazz survive. The sole exception, apart from the blues, occurred in the series of recordings made by Creole jazzmen in exile—Jelly Roll, Bechet, Ory, Nicholas and company.

Here we have Jelly's **Tia Juana** and his two versions of **Mamamita** in 1924, the **Original Jelly Roll Blues** of 1926 with castanet accompaniment, **Barbados** and **Creole** with Dave Nelson in 1930, two versions of **Fickle Fay Creep** in 1931, two of **Creepy Feeling** in 1938, and of course the whole series of "Spanish tinge" recordings for the Library of Congress that same year.

The next year, barely three weeks before Jelly Roll made his last Creole record, **The Grave** (14 December 1939), one of the milestones of jazz history was set—sidney Bechet's session with the Haitian Serenaders (22 November 1939). I have heard ten of these sides—**Rose Rumba**, **Merengue d'amour**, **Ti Ralph**, **Baba**, **Nana**, **Diane**, **Mayotte**, **Sous les palmiers**, **Tropical Moon** and **Magic Island**—but Bechet told me that another four sides of "original Haitian music" were recorded. If these are indeed what Sidney says they are, then they would constitute the first deliberate reunion of jazz and Afro-Spanish folk music in history—predating the formation of the Machito band by a year.

Certainly a deliberate effort to return to Creole jazz can be detected hereafter in the music of all jazzmen who had ever heard the real thing. Listen to Creole George Guesnon's 1940 blues tracks, especially **Iberville** and **Franklin**, then to Ory's 1944 version of **C'est l'autre cancan**, and the Creole Stompers' and wooden Joe Nicholas' versions of **Eh la bas** in 1945, and you will see what I mean. By 1947, when Ory made his own versions of **Eh la bas**, the Creole style had been reconstituted almost intact. There are traces of it in Ory's **Creole Bobo**, Wooden Joe's **Ai, Ai, Ai**, the All Star Stompers' **Dardanella** and the Creole Serenaders' **Moi pas l'aime ca**, **Salée dame** and **Les oignons** during the same year, in Bechet's **Broken Windmill** in 1949, Wilbur de Paris' **The Pearls** and **The Martinique** in 1952, Albert Nicholas' **Moi pas l'aime ca** in 1953, de Paris' **Madagascar** and Armstrong's **Chantez les bas** in 1954, Barbarin's **Eh la bas**, Parenti's **Vieux Carré** and Buckner's **Martinique** in 1955 and just about every one of such Bechet Paris recordings as **Creole Blues**, **Lastic**, **Les oignons**, **Le marchand de poisson**

and so on.

A particularly good bloc of Creole recordings were made in 1955 by Omer Siméon—**Grand Boubousse**, **Qua-ti Rhythm**, **Qua-ti Blues**, and **Lagniappe**, with Sam Price on piano and Zutty on drums, neither of them Creole jazzmen, but both of them sufficiently sensitive to the real heritage of jazz to blend perfectly with Siméon's Creole clarinet.

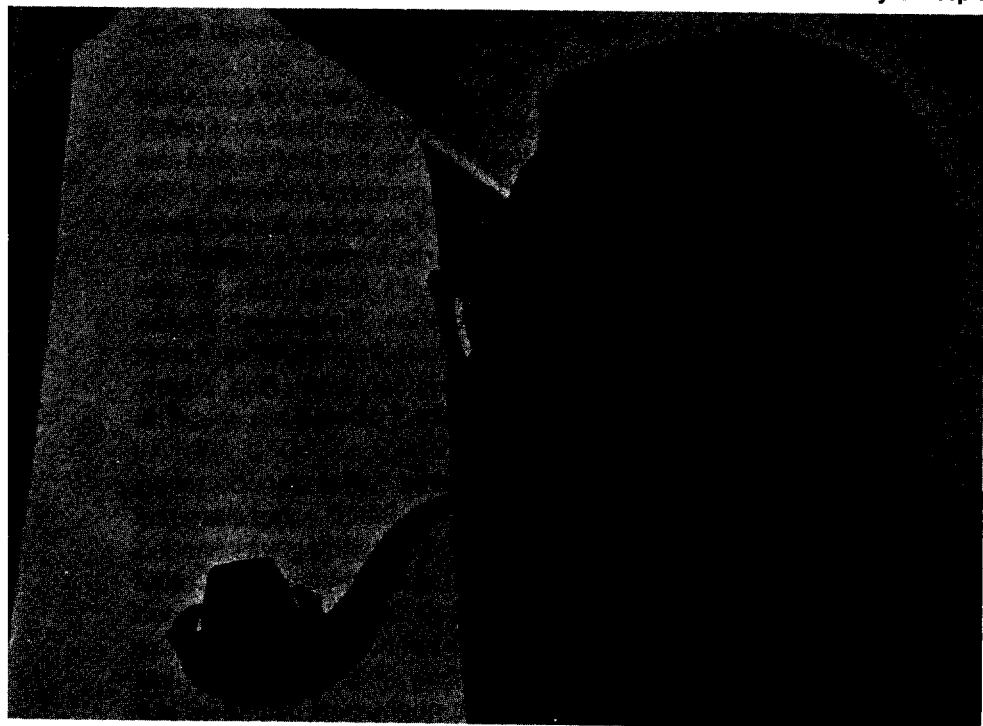
All this made at long last an impression on the revivalists. Bob Scobey recorded some mildly interesting tracks with Fred Higuera on bongoes, and some of the other revivalists explored such tunes as **Blanche Touquatoux**, **Rum and Coca Cola** and **Ce monsieur qui parle**. Far and away the most interesting development to arise out of this back-to-Creole-Jazz movement among the traditionalists occurred in England—not because English jazzmen were superior to American ones, nor because they showed greater percipience, but simply because they found themselves in daily contact with West Indian musicians.

The conditions in the English jazz world during the late 'forties and early 'fifties had this much in common with those of early New Orleans: the presence of a large contingent of Negroes who had absorbed the Creole tradition; a body of fairly skilled white instrumentalists who were willing to listen and learn; a style of phrasing still flexible enough to be bent in almost any direction.

Out of this came some of the best Creole Jazz recordings ever made. Largely inspired by Freddy Grant, a brilliant West Indian clarinetist and arranger, Humphrey Lyttelton recorded between 1951 and 1957 these 21 tunes: **Tia Juana**, **Buona Sera**, **Tangana**, **Ce Mossieu qui parle**, **Mamzelle Joséphine**, **C'est filon**, **L'année passée**, **It's Mardi Gras**, **Creole Serenade**, **Red Beans and Rice**, **Fish Seller**, **Coffee Grinder**, **Fat Tuesday**, **Muskrat Ramble**, **King Porter Stomp**, **London Blues**, **Original Jelly Roll Blues**, **Friendless Blues**, **Heat Wave**, **I Love Paris** and **The Lady in Red**.

The best of these sides came out under the name of "The Grant-Lyttelton Paseo Band"—and the word **paseo** in the title indicated (if anything was needed to indicate it) the continuing dependence of Creole jazz on the Spanish tradition. Jelly Roll Morton used to insist that there could be no jazz without "the Spanish tinge," and history has borne him out triumphantly. In fact, jazz might well have died out or become absorbed by country blues, hillbilly music or Tin Pan Alley (look what's happening to skiffle and rock and roll) if it had not been for an event which I have never seen mentioned in any jazz history—the Jones Act of March 2, 1917, whereby the island of Puerto Rico became a territory of the United States and citizenship was conferred collectively on Puerto Ricans.

# RECORD REVIEWS



Dizzy Gillespie

Bill Spilka

**DIZZY GILLESPIE: "Groovin' High".**  
Savoy MG 12020.

Gillespie, trumpet; Dexter Gordon, tenor; Frank Paparelli, piano; Chuck Wayne, guitar; Murray Shipinsky, bass; Shelley Manne, drums.

**Blue 'n' Boogie**; February 9, 1945.

Gillespie, trumpet; Charlie Parker, alto; Clyde Hart, piano; Remo Palmieri, guitar; Slam Stewart, bass; Cozy Cole, drums.

**"Groovin' High"**; Dizzy Atmosphere; All the Things You Are; February 29, 1945.

Gillespie, trumpet; Parker, alto; Al Haig, piano; Curly Russell, bass; Sid Catlett, drums. Salt Peanuts; Hot House; May 11, 1945.

Gillespie, trumpet; Sonny Stitt, alto; Haig, piano; Ray Brown, bass; Kenny Clarke, drums; Milt Jackson, vibes.

Cop Bop Sh'bam; That's Earl, Brother; May 15, 1946.

Gillespie, Dave Burns, Raymond Orr, Talib Daawood, John Lynch, trumpets; Alton Moore, Leon Cormenge, Gordon Thomas, trombones; Howard Johnson, Lucky Warren, Ray Abrams, John Brown, Saul Moore, saxes; John Lewis, piano; Brown, bass; Clarke, drums; Jackson, vibes.

**Our Delight**; June 10, 1946. **One Bass Hit Part II**; Ray's Idea; Things to Come; July 9, 1946.

Matthew McKay, Elmon Wright, trumpets; Taswell Baird, trombone; Scoops Carey, alto; Bill Frazier, tenor; Joe Harris, drums replace Orr, Daawood, Cormenge, Johnson, Abrams, Clarke.

**Emanon**; November 12, 1946.

**DIZZY GILLESPIE: "The Champ".**  
Savoy MG 12047.

Gillespie, trumpet; John Coltrane, tenor; Jackson, vibes; Kenny Burrell, guitar; Percy Heath, bass; Kansas Fields, drums.

**Tin Tin Deo**; Birk's Works; March 1, 1951.

Gillespie, trumpet; J. J. Johnson, trombone; Bud Johnson, tenor; Jackson, piano, vibes; Heath, bass; Art Blakey, drums.

**The Champ**; April 16, 1951.

Bill Graham, alto, baritone; Al Jones, drums replace Johnson and Blakey. Johnson out. **Swing Low Sweet Cadillac**; August 16, 1951. Stuff Smith, violin added.

**Caravan**; The Bluest Blues; **Sunny Side of the Street**; Stardust; October 25, 1951.

**Time on my Hands**; They Can't Take That Away from Me, date uncertain.

Gillespie, trumpet; Graham, baritone; Wynton Kelly, piano; Bernard Griggs, bass; Al Jones, drums.

**Ooo-shoo-be-doo-bee**; July 18, 1952.

**DIZZY GILLESPIE: "The Dizzy Gillespie Story".** Savoy MG 12110.

Gillespie, Burns, trumpets; John Brown, alto; James Moody, tenor; Hank Jones, piano; Ray Brown, bass; Joe Harris, drums; Jackson, vibes.

**Boppin' the Blues**; **Smokey Hollow Jump**; **Moody Speaks**; **For Hecklers Only**. September 25, 1946.

Gillespie, trumpet; Henry Coker, Richard Kenny, Harold Smith, trombones; Shirley Thompson, baritone; and a studio string orchestra conducted by Johnny Richards. Arrangements by Johnny Richards.

**Swing Low, Sweet Chariot**; **Lullaby of the Leaves**; **I Found a Million Dollar Baby**;

**What Is There to Say?**; October 31, 1950.

**Alone Together**; **These Are the Things I Love**; **On the Alamo**; **Interlude in C**; November 1, 1950.

The varied facets of Gillespie's influence can be heard in so much modern jazz that it is scarcely necessary to discuss the details of his style. Yet while his influence over nearly a decade and a half is undeniable his position in jazz is now quite changed since those few years following the initial impact of bop. For us in Europe—and, I suppose, for the great majority of listeners everywhere—that impact was first felt through the records Gillespie made—some with Parker—for obscure companies like Guild and Musi-craft in 1945 and '46. Hearing them again so long after, or to have gone on listening to them over the years, is a considerable experience. On first acquaintance they may have seemed to possess a somewhat contrived audacity but that they retain the power to delight and astonish us is sufficient indication of their worth and true originality. Uneven they may be, but all contain great moments and some now sound like jazz classics—sound, that is, as if their value will no more diminish in the future that it has in the past. Some of them can be heard on Savoy MG 12020.

Many elements went into the making of modern jazz: some were the creation of individuals and some the result of cross-fertilisation of ideas; some had been for years developing in pre-war jazz, others came from spontaneous insights. The early Gillespie records are the first preserved collective expression or synthesis of all the playing, experimenting and thinking that had gone on. Bop presented multilateral innovations: melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, etc., and, as these took several years to integrate into a homogenous idiom, it was in some ways fortunate modern jazz was not recorded until 1945. The new jazz of 1943-4 would have been interesting but immature. By 1945 the key musicians were ready.

If they were ready most of the recording supervisors were not and because it was not understood that they were presenting something really fresh, bop musicians often shared sessions with unsuitable companions. Thus on many records the new and established jazz idioms were heard side by side. This prevented properly integrated performances and was disadvantageous to the repertoire that was another of the new things the bopsters had to offer. Again, this repertoire—pieces like *Hot House* and *Shaw 'Nuff*—has been the model, even if sometimes indirectly, of so many jazz compositions that it is superfluous to describe it.

Several of these points are illustrated by *Blue 'n' Boogie*, the first title recorded under Gillespie's name. He is heard with a gathering of musicians who, though advanced in relation to the then prevailing swing idiom, show no real affinity with his ideas. Murray Shipinsky's bass is acceptable but

Shelly Manne—understandably, this was February 1945—doesn't know the kind of support Gillespie needs. Chuck Wayne plays a good modern-swing style solo but does not increase the effectiveness of the rhythm section. Add to this the squareness of Frank Paparelli's piano solo and fill-ins and the whole pulse of the performance is wrong. Despite this, and although the virtuosity was not as immaculate as it was soon to become, Gillespie's lengthy solo is fairly typical of his early maturity. Although somewhat loosely put together, it contains features of melodic invention, rhythmic structure, harmonic thinking and tone that were shortly to be recognized as characteristic and some of which he retains today. Notwithstanding Parker's work on Tiny Grimes' 1944 recordings, Monk's with Coleman Hawkins the same year, and some of the Eckstine band titles, this solo is the first fully-fledged statement we have by a modern jazz musician.

Later the same month Gillespie recorded with a more sympathetic personnel including Parker and Clyde Hart. Remo Palmieri's chugging guitar is no help, but Cozy Cole is a far more skilled and adaptable drummer. Slam Stewart is an insufficiently attacking bassist but fits into the scheme of things better than anyone who has not heard the titles could believe, and his solos on two of them are among his best in any context. Hart pecks out the changes with discretion and sympathy and was one of the few pianists qualified for this kind of music at the time. (Speaking of this period Oscar Pettiford said, "All of us were thinking about the new style, trying to get used to play it. Clyde was the only pianist that could play those things without any trouble.") *Groovin' High* and *Dizzy Atmosphere* are typical compositions of the bop repertoire and excellent vehicles for both horns—better than much Gillespie has found since. Parker plays fluently, revealing—especially in *Groovin' High*—a side of his solo personality not much represented on records. His tone has an airy, singing lightness reminiscent of Benny Carter and the solos are shaped with melodic grace and elegance. This delicacy again characterised his playing on the *Ornithology/Yarbird Suite* date of March 1946 and, to a lesser degree, the *Stupendous/Cheers* session of February '47. But it was always rare. Gillespie has two solos in *Groovin'* the first of which begins strikingly but ends with a miscalculated and ineffective descending phrase that leads into a bland guitar solo. At the close the tempo halves and he plays four bars of beautifully-shaped legato trumpet unlike anything recorded before. In the faster *Dizzy Atmosphere* he takes a daring solo that imparts the essence of the bop solo style, and in itself gives a very good idea of why he occupied so commanding a position in

the early days of modern jazz. After the solos there is an attractive and unusual unison passage for the horns that leads back to a partial re-statement of the theme. *All the Things You Are* commences with the riff that had opened Eckstine's *Good Jelly* recording of the year before. Hart is unusually conservative in his solo but Parker's eight bars, though fragmentary, look forward to the three lovely *Bird of Paradise* solos based on this sequence he was to record of Dial in 1947.

The date that produced *Hot House* and *Salt Peanuts* has a better personnel still. Al Haig, the finest bop pianist for group playing and accompaniment, was present and Curly Russell was on bass. Sid Catlett's conception was appropriately sensitive to the requirements of the music even though he could not provide quite the backing Kenny Clarke might have given. Using the chords of standard ballads as the basis for new compositions was common during this period and Tadd Dameron's *Hot House* is a superior example of the practice. The trumpet solo here is nicely poised over Haig's sensitive accompaniment and contains some passages that effectively illustrate the use of double-time in bop. Parker sharply contrasts some of his phrases in a way typical of his later solos.

*Salt Peanuts* has more scoring than usual and some interesting harmonic touches. It is a good, rather aggressive theme based on an octave-jump idea and the scoring yields a somewhat fuller sound than one might expect from a two-horn ensemble. Parker sounds less assured than usual but Haig's solo is especially good. Gillespie is better still. His entry could hardly be more arresting and underlines as clearly as any moment in these records the absolute freshness of his imagination at this time; surely no one before would have associated such a passage with the trumpet. The rest of the solo is played with great conviction. (In another version of this recorded soon after with a less sympathetic group the trumpet solo replaces some of this intensity with greater clarity of organization.)

Parker's work was very uneven throughout 1945 and never on these sessions has the vividness and power it was soon to acquire. Even so, it is noticeable that on the records from which he is absent Gillespie dominates more. Twelve months after the *Hot House* recording Gillespie led a session on which—at last—all the participants played in the bop idiom. Sonny Stitt, who was just gaining a reputation as the first man to emulate Parker's style, has a fair sixteen-bar solo on *Oop Bop Sh' bam* that is close to his exemplar in tone but is much simpler in melodic concept. The trumpet playing is bolder than ever and on this title Gillespie takes one of the best solos he had recorded up to this point.

Eight of the titles on Savoy MG 12020 are by these small groups. It is unfortunate others could not be included, particularly **Shaw 'nuff**, **Good Bait**, **I Can't Get Started**, and **Bebop**—the two latter containing perhaps Gillespie's finest solos of the period. As it is the remainder of the disc is occupied by five performances by the big band—his second—Gillespie led in the later 'forties. Despite the originality of their small combo work the boppers did not establish a comparable big band idiom. Because of its complexity bop was essentially small group music. The additional harmonic vocabulary could easily be written into band scores but the melodic complexity of the leading soloists' improvisations, and some of the rhythmic devices could not. Brass and reed scoring did show the influence of Parker's and Gillespie's melodic patterns and thus had a degree of originality but there was no innovation in ensemble texture or the relationships of the sections. It would be broadly true to say the bop men adapted their style to the big band, rather than the converse. The best arranger was Gil Fuller. While possessing a fine sense of the big band style and an acute awareness of the requirements of the large ensemble he appeared to sacrifice fewer of the new innovations and to compromise less with tradition. In spite of this, his arrangements, more complex than Basie's, less subtle of texture than Ellington's, seem in their use of the orchestra as a virtuoso instrument to derive from Sy Oliver's work with Lunceford. Marked differences arise from Fuller's harmonic and melodic vocabulary, but both men used their orchestras as vehicles for dazzling ensemble virtuosity with sharp, almost dramatic contrasts of texture. Yet Fuller's imagination, like Oliver's, was disciplined and he never wrote passages that were eccentric or unbalanced. The work of both arrangers is characterised by clarity of texture and exceptional fullness and depth of sound. If there is a band score that reflects the spirit of Gillespie's solos it is Fuller's **Things to Come**. Unfortunately it was played too fast in the recording studio to produce its full effect, and Fuller got this conception over more successfully in "**The Scene Changes**," which he recorded for Discovery in 1949. Even so, **Things** remains a brilliant score with astonishing interplay between the sections and harshly accented brass chords. Here and in **One Bass Hit, Part two** Gillespie's solos are not very happy. The ideas are evident as usual but it is as if he experienced difficulty in shaping his material in relation to the heavier sounds and thicker textures of this context. Remarks about the basically traditional scoring of most of these performances are illustrated by the conventional theme statement of Dameron's excellent **Our Delight** and the saxophone writing in **One Bass Hit**.

Both in **Our Delight** and **Ray's Idea** Gillespie responds to the melodic substance of the theme with masterful solos better aligned with their accompaniment than usual. In **Emanon**, a blues, there are unusually forceful exchanges between trumpet and orchestra, some pungent ensemble dissonances, a solo by John Lewis and remarkable unaccompanied scoring for the trumpets. Some interesting though less significant small combo recordings from this period (1946) are reissued on Savoy MG 12110. Among those featured is John Jackson, a now forgotten Parker disciple whose solos—like Stitt's at this time—resemble his exemplar in tone but were in a far simpler melodic style. The trumpeter Dave Burns was a rather more positive follower of Gillespie. His work is unusual in that he thoroughly understood the Gillespie conception and was able to play fluently within it without having the originator's extraordinary technical equipment. It is illuminating to compare them as they alternate on **Smokey Hollow Jump**. Despite their resemblance to Gillespie's Burns's ideas are somewhat predictable and, on **Moody Speaks**, very nearly commonplace. Again, the themes are fairly typical of the style and period and two of them, **Smokey Hollow** and **For Hecklers Only**, were partly composed by Gil Fuller. Gillespie's best solo of the session comes on the latter title and he makes a sober muted contribution to **Boppin' the Blues**. Although he is not too happy in the bridge, **Smokey Hollow** has one of Milt Jackson's better early solos. James Moody plays very poor tenor on each title. It was also in 1946 Gillespie made his first records with strings. These were of some of Jerome Kern's tunes and remained unissued because of objections made by the composer's widow. In 1950 he made another attempt and recorded eight miscellaneous titles. Eddie South, in some delightful records made in Paris with Django Reinhardt more than twenty years ago proved the violin can be a good solo jazz instrument but the lead he then gave was never properly followed up and **en masse**, strings have been a consistent failure. It has become widely believed they cannot be successfully employed in jazz because of their sweetness. This is untrue and the orchestration of contemporary composers like Bartok—e.g. in his **Divertimento for Strings**—shows that when employed with adequate insight and accomplishment strings will yield a wide variety of invigorating sounds. The writing on all jazz albums utilising strings has been amateurish and based on the most facile conceptions of light music. The scores Johnny Richards produced for Gillespie are probably the worst of all, and in some the strings are only one of a number of practically irreconcilable elements. **Swing Low, Sweet Chariot**

opens with a thin, light music introduction that is quite unrelated to what follows. The rhythm is established by Latin American instruments and a small group of male voices sings not the beautiful original melody but a commonplace new one—presumably by Richards. Gillespie also sings, quite agreeably, and sounds oddly like Louis Armstrong, though less husky. His trumpet solo has continuity and ideas that are surprisingly good in view of the distracting accompaniment. A final touch of incongruity is provided by the recapitulation of the string introduction. **Alone Together** has an absurd haunted house opening but the strings accompany Gillespie's theme statement without too much obstruction. Nor are they unduly offensive in **These Are The Things I Love**, but little enthusiasm can be expected from Gillespie in this context and a soloist can derive no impetus from such accompaniments. **Lullaby of the Leaves** is brisker and has a few dashing trumpet phrases but Gillespie never sounds really involved. He blows more forcefully in **On the Alamo** but is unable to develop a train of thought as his solo passages are separated by interludes in ghastly good-taste by strings and piano (Paul Smith). **Interlude in C** is a tasteless hodge-podge based on a theme from Rachmaninoff's **Piano Concerto No. 2**. The string writing seems to be the worst in the collection but perhaps this is only because of the unavoidable comparison with Rachmaninoff's own. These string sessions were experimental and their failure is not in itself particularly significant. It is only when we consider the bulk of Gillespie's recording in the 'fifties that a number of disturbing points arise. An uninspiring selection from some 1951 sessions can be heard on Savoy MG 12047 and, as they are all too typical of what was to follow, a few comments on them must be made first. **The Champ** is really a good theme but all the solos, except J. J. Johnson's, are exhibitionistic and empty. Gillespie's is cohesive enough but he employs the more superficial of his mannerisms rather glibly. **Tin Tin Deo** and **Birk's Works** are pleasantly restrained, if slightly negative, performances with some good moments from Milt Jackson on the latter. On several titles Gillespie is unsuitably teamed with the violinist Stuff Smith. One of them, **Caravan**, suits the trumpeter particularly well but Smith's sawing in the foreground is distracting and unpleasant. Joe Carroll's rather expressionless singing and Smith's all too expressive violin playing go amusingly well together in **Time on My Hands**. **Stardust** features Gillespie throughout and is a thoughtful but still rather pedestrian track. The prevailing impression conveyed by these and many similar records is of an artist who no longer wishes to dominate, or indeed to control, his sur-

roundings. Isolated fine records have got made but for a long time now it has been as if Gillespie no longer has an objective and has even lost his sense of direction. This is as true of recent items as those mentioned above. Despite the fine work of Rollins and Stitt on **Sonny Side Up** (Verve MG 8262) the most notable aspect of that record for me was Gillespie's failure, not merely to dominate, but, almost, to assert himself at all. The contrast between all this and his brilliant and purposeful work in the 'forties is all too obvious. Whatever may be the individual personal assessment of their worth, Gillespie's early small combo records indisputably embody a genuine re-thinking of the basic essentials of jazz in new terms. Nothing he has done since can alter Gillespie's vital position in the earlier developments of modern jazz, nor can the subsequent influence of the music he created in those years be disputed. The question his later records compel us to ask is why he has failed to maintain his commanding position and go on to further achievements—for today he is just an unusually individual soloist who only occasionally extends himself.

Perhaps part of the answer lies in the nature of the man's gifts. Louis Armstrong's abilities as an actor and 'showman' have impeded the total fulfillment of his musical genius and it may be Gillespie is too much of a fun-man to wish or be able to maintain any kind of 'leading' position for long. Creator and clown cannot exist peacefully together indefinitely and in the commercial climate in which jazzmen must work musical gifts must often take second place to more easily appreciated qualities. Again, when his big band broke up early in 1950 he found it necessary somehow to broaden the scope of his appeal—records show his tone changed at about this time—and this may have led to a dissipation of his talents.

These tentative explanations may be wide of the mark but it is already clear that Gillespie's failure to retain the unique and creatively influential position he once had is one of the most notable failures of modern jazz in the decade now ending.

Max Harrison

#### CANNONBALL ADDERLEY: "Jump for Joy". Mercury MG 36146.

Julian "Cannonball" Adderley, alto sax; Emmett Berry, trumpet; Bill Evans, piano; Barry Galbraith, guitar; Milt Hinton, bass; Jimmy Cobb, drums; Gene Orloff and Leo Kruczek, violins; Dave Schwartz, viola; George Ricci, cello.

**Two Left Feet; Just Squeeze Me; I Got It Bad And That Ain't Good; Nothin'; Jump For Joy; Bli-Blip; Chocolate Shake; If Life Were All Peaches And Cream; Brownskin Gal In A Calico Gown; The Tune Of The Hickory Stick.** All arrangements by Bill Russo.

This is certainly one of the most unusual jazz records to come out in some time: the fine arranging talent of Bill Russo, the brilliant alto work of Cannonball Adderley, and a Duke Ellington score which should be done more often.

Russo has done a masterful job. The arrangements bear the stamp of his personality, and at the same time retain the Ellington spirit. He makes use of some most unusual sonorities which at times remind one of some of those "Cannonball Adderley with Strings" sides, particularly the soulful **I Got It Bad** and **If Life Were All Peaches And Cream**. He gets a lovely effect on **Squeeze Me** which recalls the Miles Davis interpretation in its gentleness. He gives **Two Left Feet** and **Hickory Stick** just the right touches of humor.

But I have some reservations about the string quartet on certain tracks. On **Bli-Blip** Russo has the quartet do some percussive effects—good, but I miss the impact of a full band here.

The same is true of many of the other faster tracks. The use of the string quartet in these instances gives me the impression of the Budapest group trying to play **Night In Tunisia**—it doesn't sound right. But it's worth a try, isn't it?

Adderley does some of his finest playing on this record. He seems to have a feeling for these tunes, and it shows. He has a fine natural swing to his playing which seems made to order for stuff like this, and I'd like to hear him do more of it. He does everything—he cooks his head off, he does the ballads with a quiet yet intense lyricism, he gets funky, and all at just the right time. It is interesting to note how far he has progressed in the formation of a style all his own; this recording was done in 1958, not too long after he had joined Miles Davis, and the effects of his exposure to Miles and John Coltrane are plain.

Cannonball is breaking further away from the Charlie Parker mold all of the time, doing things of his own and making them come out of that horn. His distinctive, brilliant sound, a tremendous sound for an alto—at times it sounds more like a light tenor—adds new dimensions to these tunes. Emmett Berry is effective in his occasional solo spots and adds depth to the supporting group. The rhythm section is alert, sure and solid, with Evans and Hinton in particular standing out.

Zita Carno

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**RUBY BRAFF: "Easy Now".**

**RCA Victor LPM-1966.**

**Ruby Braff, Emmett Berry, trumpets; Bob Wilbur, tenor sax; Vic Dickenson, trombone; Leonard Gaskin, bass; Mundell Lowe, guitar; Marty Napoleon, piano; Don Lamond, drum. My Walking Stick; When My Sugar Walks down the Street; This is my Lucky Day; For Now; I Just Couldn't Take It Baby; Little Man You've Had a Busy Day. Ruby Braff, Roy Eldridge, trumpets; Hank Jones, piano; Lowe, Gaskin, and Lamond. Willow, Weep for Me; The Song is Ended; Give my Regards to Broadway; Someday You'll be Sorry; Yesterdays.**

I think I would have enjoyed this music more if I had heard it in person; the warmth of it doesn't reach me on this record—and I think it's for technical reasons that it doesn't. The microphones in general use nowadays are unfair to the whole style of jazz this record represents. Nowadays most of the recording is done with Telefunken microphones, or others with similar characteristics, that pick up the top part of the sound and emphasize the highs, without enough lows. This musical style is played with plenty of highs in the first place, and when they are emphasized by recording equipment, the result is not true to what the players sound like. The music sounds shrill, and when a player opens up, it comes out as a shriek, like a small insect flying in angry circles around a room.

I like everybody on this record in varying degrees, but I prefer the tracks with two trumpets to the septet tracks. I think that the arrangements on the septet tracks were made only for the instrumentation, not for the men involved. These men have very individual timbres and vibratos; this kind of anonymous ensemble writing doesn't work out for them, nor they for the writing.

There are a lot of tracks, but a monotony of tempos. I get impressions of just two—a medium bounce, and a ballad tempo a bit slower.

Sometimes when the two trumpets are playing together I couldn't tell which was who—especially with Roy and Ruby, but on the other hand, I haven't heard as much of them as I would like to have.

Emmett Berry is an unsung hero. I like him especially for his rhythmic conception; he really gets into the middle of the beat and sits right on it. Even playing alone, he would have that kind of fine inside time and swing.

I particularly like Vic Dickenson, but this record makes me want to hear him in person. Of course, Roy has developed his own voice and should stick to it. He

was also one of the most important of the men who developed the style of the thirties. Those men had to do it for themselves; they had had few examples to fall back on, comparatively few men who preceded them from whom to develop their styles. On the other hand, you would think that a younger man who took up a style of a time before his own would find no challenge in it since, you might say, so much of the work has been done for him. He might find that way of playing a pleasure, but only easy fun. But I don't think that that is true of Ruby: he does find a challenge in the style, and he is creative in it. However, I don't think he or anyone else happened to find their challenge this time on this lp. It seems to me that the same men could have done the same thing as well almost any time.

**Art Farmer**

**JOHN BENSON BROOKS: "The Alabama Concerto". Riverside RLP 12-276.**

**Art Farmer, trumpet; Julian Adderley, alto sax; Barry Galbraith, guitar; Milt Hinton, bass; Brooks, piano (third movement only). First Movement; The Henry John Story; Some Lady's Green; Green Rocky Breasts (Nature!); Job's Red Wagon. Second Movement: Trampin'; The Loop. Third Movement: Little John Shoes; Milord's Calling. Fourth Movement: Blues For Christmas; Rufus Playboy; Grandma's Coffin.**

"The Alabama Concerto" is derived from "folk music" thematic sources encountered by John Benson Brooks during an association with the folklorist Harold Courlander. It is, of course, somewhat of a misnomer to refer to it as a concerto; it comes far closer to being an updated form of the concerto-grosso, in that it consists of a suite-like series of theme and variation movements constructed in a ripieno-concertino relationship. The soloists improvise on a harmonic basis derived by Brooks from his basic thematic material. This chordal derivation is quite a bit more sophisticated than the folk material would, by its nature, imply, and it is only by the occasional use of archaic rhythmic and melodic devices that Brooks retains an identification with the character of his source of material. In this respect the use of Cannonball Adderley as a soloist has both advantages and disadvantages. There are times in which he brings an element of blues, earthiness and pure funk to places which would otherwise be constricted by their

suave sophistication (ie. **Blues For Christmas**). On the other hand, there are times when he seems incapable of reaching beneath the surface of the music to find the jauntily swinging subtleties in which it abounds. I suspect also that the rather peculiar rhythmic inflections employed by Adderley are not exactly what Brooks had in mind when he wrote the **Concerto**. Adderley tends to play in a kind of suspension on top of the beat and there are places (his solo directly before the end of the first movement) in which his differences with Galbraith and Hinton are more than obvious. Art Farmer, however, seems to have grasped Brooks' intentions. Having listened to the record and subsequently studied the score, I think that there is an absolute unity of intent between the lines written by Brooks and the solos improvised by Farmer. Listen particularly to the lyric beauty of his line in the slow section of **The Loop**; and again to the amazing unity existing between the theme of **Rufus Playboy** ritornello and his solos which follow it. The rhythm section plays excellently and Barry Galbraith in particular once again demonstrates his startling virtuosity as a section, rhythm, single line, and chording guitar player.

Brooks was, during the middle forties, one of the best of a large number of top-notch dance band arrangers. His charts for the Randy Brooks, Les Brown and Tommy Dorsey bands were beautiful examples of the rich sonorities to be found within the structure of dance band instrumentation. Yet one of the major criticisms that can be made of the **Alabama Concerto** is that it lacks in tonal color. I can only attribute this to the fact that, in a number of places, he seems to use his instruments as if they were part of larger sections. The opening **John Henry** statement almost by its nature suggests a brass section figure, and in many places the interplay between trumpet and alto are strongly reminiscent of moving brass over a chording sax section. There are numerous other examples, although there are certainly many sections in which the four voices function satisfactorily in an integral relationship with each other.

It seems likely that in this composition Brooks had not adequately solved his own tonal problems and as a result, the harmonic texture which he has devised simply overpowers the instrumentation involved. And it may also have provoked a tendency to orchestrate with larger forms in mind. I'm not suggesting that a small group is necessarily limited to simple tonal structures. Certainly the Bartok string quartets are more than adequate proof that such is not the case. But I do feel that the limitations involved in a form which



states thematic material and then derives from it a complex vertical harmonic structure as a basis for improvisation can easily result in tonal stultification. There are too many instances in which it is only possible to produce a skeleton of the intended tonal effect. If Brooks had given his soloists something more in the way of a horizontal tonal basis, and if his concerted sections had been derived more from the basis of the thematic groups implicit in the material itself rather than from an externally imposed verticality, this would have been a more satisfactory composition. Although there are many aspects of this record which do not quite come off, it would be foolish to overlook the importance of Brooks' intentions as a composer. There is about this music the air of a brilliant mentality at work. In places it overwhelms the music, uprooting it from its sources and making it into a gem of sophisticated logic. This is both good and bad; good for Brooks's development, but not so good for this as a work of art. The problem which he has set for himself; that of finding a rapprochement between the root sources of music and the incredibly intricate techniques of contemporary composition is a problem which must eventually be met by anyone who considers himself to be a serious composer. In "the Alabama Concerto," Brooks has shown that he is one of the few who are grappling with the problem with all the resources at their command.

Don Heckman

#### RAY BROWN:

"This is Ray Brown".

Verve MG-8290.

Brown, bass; Oscar Peterson, piano and organ; Herb Ellis, guitar; Osie Johnson, drums; Jerome Richardson, flute.

Although Ray Brown is a superb bass player and has a compatible group of musicians to work with on this date, it isn't altogether successful either as a group effort or as a vehicle for the display of his solo voice. Much of the uneasiness I feel is due to the sound of the Hammond organ. I try not to get sidetracked by the associations I have with that instrument, skating rinks and soap operas, but after Oscar Peterson's introduction to *The Nearness of You* I keep half expecting to hear a handsome-voiced announcer telling me about Helen Trent's latest unrequited romance.

Aside from such distracting images, the Hammond organ's

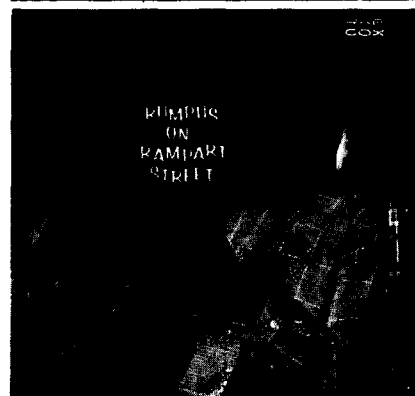
electronically generated tone, automatic vibrato and unavoidable sameness of attack prevent the musician from getting his own voice into the music. Oscar and a few other organists have managed to make the thing swing, but the main sound, resonance, attack and release are characteristics of the organ rather than of the organist and aren't particularly pleasing to my ear. I wonder if an adjustable vibrato control such as Milt Jackson uses on his vibes would humanize this damn machine a little?

They have recorded Ray well here, but the illusion of the physical position of the instruments in relation to each other shifts radically as the control-room balance is constantly changed to favor whoever is soloing. Since it is Ray's date he is given precedence on each mixture, but sometimes it sounds like the rest of the musicians are being dollied in and out of the adjoining room as they continue to play. I realize that there are difficulties involved in recording this instrumentation, but if the musicians can't balance themselves so that each other's solos are audible in the studio there's little point in playing at all. Ray displays enviable agility all over the fingerboard and uses it in the service of well-developed ideas most of the time. One of the physical problems of the bass that he hasn't completely solved (who has?) is the difficulty in sustaining the big buttery sound he gets (when there's time to pluck a string strongly and hold it into the fingerboard long enough to make the instrument resonate completely) through rapid passages where there isn't time to pluck all the notes or to let each one ring before shifting for the next one. His simple figures sing with the same marvelous sonority that is present in his four-four lines, while many of his double and triple-time figures have only about half that sound. This creates enforced dynamics that don't always coincide with the structure of the phrase he's playing.

Oscar, Herb and Osie lay down the time with energy and drive, but never violently; these are big strong men doing an honest day's work with vigor and good humor. Jerome's flute adds an attractive tonal color to the bass and guitar but sounds terribly fragile when matched with the specific gravity of the organ, no matter how evenly the control room matches the volume levels. Herb's strummed rhythm guitar blends with the bass solos better than any other accompaniment on the record, and the sound he and Ray make walking chords and lines together bowls you along both rhythmically and harmonically just the way you always wanted to be bowled along.

Bill Crow

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**KENNY BURRELL: "Blue Lights, Volume I". Blue Note 1596.**  
**Louis Smith, trumpet; Junior Cook, tenor; Tina Brooks, tenor; Kenny Burrell, guitar; Duke Jordan, piano; Sam Jones, bass; Art Blakey, drums.**

**Yes Baby; Scotch Blues.**

**Bobby Timmons, piano for Jordan. Autumn in New York. Burrell, Timmons, Jones and Blakey. Caravan.**

If someone were to ask me what had happened to hard bop or funky jazz since the early fifties, I would only have to use this record.

Of course, the hard bop movement owed little or nothing to the cool school, but it actually owed only slightly more to bop. If bop is taken at its best in the work of Parker, I think it is obvious that few, if any, of the hard boppers have understood the nature of Parker's rhythmic contribution to jazz. Parker introduced a dazzling rhythmic complexity which brought an entirely new concept of time into jazz. There was, certainly, much more to the bop revolution, but I do feel that this was the essence of it. The hard boppers sought and found their tradition in the groovy world of rhythm and blues and gospel music rather than in bop.

What resulted was music almost entirely blues based and oriented, and which consisted, and consists, of strings of long solos derived from the chords fed to the soloists with regularity by the pianist. In and around this movement certain remarkable soloists have developed and their best work is now concerned with a search for individual form which is often hampered, by their working in groups where form is but a word. For hard bop itself has fallen victim to the monotony of formlessness implicit in its earliest attempts. The average hard bop soloist is only too content to run the changes in the most pedestrian way by now, and a concern for melody and form is easily forgotten. It is this sort of formlessness which characterizes this record and makes it, with an important exception to be noted later, such a trying listening experience.

In Art Blakey we have the archetype of the hard bop drummer. But on this record he seems unwilling to enliven things with the dynamism of which he is capable. He coasts along contentedly on a series of rolls and accents which are, by this time, clichés. Louis Smith is one of the latest in the line of those trumpeters who derive from Fats Navarro through Clifford Brown. Smith, like Brown, lacks Navarro's sense for concise statement, and he seems quite happy leaping from chord to chord as though melody were an unheard of thing. Yet, Smith still strikes me as having a definite potential, most obviously apparent in his good tone,

which he constantly stifles. The first half of his solo on *Caravan*, for instance, seems to augur well, but then he falls back on running the chords again. Cook and Brooks are almost indistinguishable here. They descend, roughly, from Young by Gordon, Stitt, Coltrane, Gray, and God-knows-who else. The worst that can be said of them here is that they are dull, and not in a new way. Brooks has his best moments on *Yes Baby*, but his playing on the rest of the tracks is just desultory. I have heard Cook in person when he struck me as a still developing but interesting soloist. I hope my recollection is the accurate one, and that this session only represents a bad day. Burrell is a standard post-Christian guitarist. He serves to remind one of how little has been done with the guitar since Charlie Christian, who is as much misunderstood as Parker.

*Autumn in New York* is all Burrell and belongs in a hip cocktail lounge, not in a jazz album.

Sam Jones is a splendid bassist. He is a bit too self-effacing, which is too bad since he is a better soloist than most bassists. Here he is somewhat in the background, but one is grateful to and for him.

Bobby Timmons is a promising soloist; he is, obviously, not yet sure of what he wants to say nor of how to say it. But when he finds out the results should be worth listening to. Here one can hear Wilson, Silver, and several others with an occasional glimpse of the essentially lyrical Timmons peering out.

Yet there is one good reason for owning this record and that is that appearances of Duke Jordan are so rare. On *Yes Baby* his first solo is such a model of melodic construction and beauty that it makes all that comes before and after worthwhile. When he returns for a chorus after Sam Jones, it is so beautiful that one wants to laugh, cry, gesticulate, and give copies of the record to all one's friends. On his own *Scotch Blues*, unfortunately, Jordan fails to develop very much, although he is always in there trying. The main mistake seems to be his attempt at a chordal approach which is simply unsuitable to his style. But the solos on *Yes Baby* are there, and they will last for a long, long time.

H. A. Woodfin

**HARRY EDISON: "The Swinger". Verve MG V-8295.**

**Edison, trumpet; Jimmy Forrest, tenor; Jimmy Jones, piano; Freddie Greene, guitar; Joe Benjamin, bass; Charlie Persip, drums. Pussy Willow, The Very Thought of You, Nasty, The Strollers, Sunday, Fair Ground.**

Edison's strength is in his perfect

time. His melodic concept isn't ambitious, or strikingly original; he works with short simple phrases, doesn't build, and makes no vast flights. Rhythmically, though, he's a master. Those unstartling lines move so well because each note is placed so perfectly. Of his contemporaries on trumpet, Roy Eldridge gives him the best competition, but aside from the superficial similarities (common to most trumpeters of their generation) they are entirely different. Roy is a romantic, a builder of vast choruses. When he makes it he is sublime, but he doesn't always make it and he suffers from a tendency to play flat, waste notes, and scream when he runs out of ideas. Sweets, though he lacks Roy's melodic gifts on the grand scale, is absolutely consistent, safer than Roy because he takes fewer risks. He can get a little dull (as on *Fair Ground* in this set), but he is never in bad taste, never unrelaxed or out of control. His phrasing is short and to the point, conservative harmonically and structurally, but spiced (at medium and up tempos) with rapid flaky passages rarely longer than a bar. He likes to end a long sustained note with one of these. Sweets cuts everybody at so simple a thing as holding a note; his tone is so clear, and within a certain range of tempos his vibrato makes triplets, with the effect that he rides the note rhythmically without altering breathing or volume. He also knows how to repeat a note or a little phrase with a different rhythmic emphasis each time. And there are rests, plenty of rests. I think certain younger players who run to long strings of unrelieved eighths or sixteenths could learn a lot about rests from Edison. I've heard him play better than on this album, but this can almost always be said. His best work here is on *The Strollers*, a medium blues, and two magnificent breaks he takes on *Sunday*, trading fours with Forrest and Persip. Forrest is a tenor who deserves more attention than he seems to be getting. He has technique to spare, and great fluency, plays a lot of notes, but not in the hammering style of the Coltrane school. Even when honking a note he avoids a harsh sound. His tone is full, but his vibrato is light and delicate, and tends to disappear at fast tempos, except on the final note of a phrase. He gets a warm, husky sound, and uses a growl now and then. His lines are flowing and balanced, but, like Edison, he takes few risks. (That sounds just a little too patronizing; he doesn't play a dull note in the set, and everything he tries, he makes with ease.) The excellent rhythm section sounds as though it's been working as a unit for months. Persip's playing is beautiful, never loud; he uses fine little snare figures at fast tempos

which really lift, and never clash with the soloist. Benjamin is steady, and provides nice, if standard, lines. I have to look far to find any complaint with the rhythm section; if there is one, it's that Benjamin tends to pinch off his notes a little, instead of letting them sound full. Since Greene is there to make the changes explicit, Jones can afford to let some by and concentrate on accenting and taking care of the holes. His accompaniment is clean and spare. He is always in the right place and never in the way, makes the change and then shuts up. He is less effective as a soloist, though; his choruses are uneventful, full of long, functionless empty spaces during which I keep waiting for something to happen, and he likes those Red Garland block voicings which I would prefer left out of any pianist's work. In addition, that extreme lightness of touch never varies, which eliminates most of his chances for shadings in dynamics, however subtle. Except for *Sunday* and *The Very Thought of You*, all the tunes are originals by Edison, and all blues, medium or fast. Recording balance is very fine. Notes, by Nat Hentoff, are gently anecdotal.

Maitland Edey

**DUKE ELLINGTON:** "Anatomy of a Murder", music from the sound track of the motion picture. Columbia CL 1360. Main title (featuring Ray Nance and Jimmy Hamilton); *Flirtbird* (Johnny Hodges); *Way Early Subtone* (Russell Procope); *Hero to Zero* (Harry Carney & Paul Gonsalves); *Low Key Lightly* (Nance); *Happy Anatomy* (Clark Terry & Gonsalves); *Midnight Indigo*; *Almost Cried* (Harold Baker); *Sunswept Sunday* (Hamilton); *Grace Valse*; *Happy Anatomy* (the P. I. Five); *Haupé* (Hodges); *Upper and Outest* (Cat Anderson)

This collection of pieces from the sound track of Otto Preminger's *Anatomy of a Murder* is in several respects disquieting for the long term Ellington admirer. Although it is superior to what most other jazz leaders could do, at no point does it exhibit the originality of "Such Sweet Thunder" or any of his best work. The invention is almost as prolific as ever but does not seem to be so typical of Ellington as usual. This is largely because the music departs from the highly distinctive melodic and harmonic idioms he has evolved. The thread of commonplace that runs through most of these pieces may be due to his having to compromise in some directions to meet the unaccustomed requirements of film music. In the *American Weekly Entertainment Guide*

of August 1, 1959 he is quoted saying, "Music in pictures should say something without being obviously music, you know, and this was all new to me." This might account for the curiously negative effect some of it produces when heard in isolation away from the film. Perhaps he is aware of its shortcomings for he is also quoted as stating, "The next one will be better. I'll try another one and then I'll show them." None of this, however, explains why these performances are about the most disinterested-sounding the band has ever recorded. Execution is every bit as good as one would expect but the lack of enthusiasm is manifest on most tracks in a heaviness that cannot all be accounted for by the unusually thick scoring sometimes adopted.

The music for the main title begins somewhat rhetorically with wa-wa fanfares and strong ensemble chords, and with the drummer hammering the off-beat relentlessly. This resolves to an ostinato saxophone figure with brass interjections. Nance has a good wa-wa solo in the form of a dialogue with these interjections. Both ostinato and drum-pounding are abandoned later when Ellington takes one of those slightly quizzical piano solos of his. *Flirtbird* is an excellently composed vehicle for Hodges and it is unfortunate he does not take full advantage of it. A lack of enthusiasm is again suggested by his perfunctory phrases and his stiff, almost hard tone is reminiscent of Tab Smith's playing in the 'forties (for example on Charlie Shaver's *Mountain Air* and *Rosetta* on *Keynote*). The score has four main themes and this track introduces one of them, a six-note phrase that is antiphonally used here in three dialogues. The first is between Ellington, who states it several times with variations, and the ensemble, who provide a different response to each of these. Hodges then takes Ellington's place and supplies further variations but keeping the idea recognizable. Finally the band and soloist reverse places. The same six-note motive is employed in Baker's feature, *Almost Cried*, but not in such an interesting way. Nonetheless this underrated trumpeter's playing, with its unusually clean tone, is always enjoyable to hear. Another use of this theme is in the introduction of *Early Subtone*. This has a beautiful section by Procope's clarinet but is otherwise chiefly disconnected padding. *Hero to Zero*, one of the best tracks, is a good piece of atmospheric writing. There is no central melodic interest until the theme appears towards the end, and most of the time Carney's and Gonsalves's lines are simply the most prominent thread in the texture rather than the focal points. Thematically related to this are

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#### Low Key Lightly and Haupé.

The former has a lengthy piano introduction leading to some rather graceful schmalz from Nance's violin. Haupé is another Hodges feature and elicits much better playing from him. His tone is softer and the melodic lines are more sensitively shaped. It is a less imaginative composition than *Flirtibird*.

*Happy Anatomy* is a simple vehicle for improvisation with solos by Gonsalves and Terry. The backgrounds are particularly good, especially the trumpets behind Gonsalves; but the drummer is too heavy again. Terry's contribution is easily the best solo on the disc. *Midnight Indigo* opens with the beautiful combinations of xylophone, string bass and Carney's bass clarinet leading to a dialogue between piano and xylophone. There are some rich, quietly sustained chords on the horns and at moments the delicacy of texture is worthy of such pieces at the 1940 *Dusk*. Altogether a beautiful piece that no other jazz musician would have had the refinement of imagination to carry out successfully.

*Sunswept Sunday* is a stodgy non-jazz piece appropriately featuring Jimmy Hamilton. Within the context of film music it is no criticism to state this is not jazz and it clearly had to be included in this lp, but it is not good material for the Ellington band. Still less suitable is *Grace Valse*, a sadly conventional piece of heavy 'light' music. *Upper and Outest* is patched together from the forgoing items, ostinato figure, six-note theme, heavy drumming and all. It is an unpalatable rehash. Cat Anderson makes his appearance towards the end of this piece and the end of this review is perhaps the place to disagree with the views expressed on him when the last Ellington disc was reviewed here (*The Jazz Review*, May 1959). I wonder if those who think Anderson is not a jazz musician know his solos on *Jam with Sam*, *Cat Walk*, or *Stompy Jones*. Presumably not.

Max Harrison

#### "BENNY GOLSON and the Philadelphians". United Artists UAL 4020.

Benny Golson, tenor sax; Lee Morgan, trumpet; Ray Bryant, piano; Percy Heath, bass; Philly Joe Jones, drums; *You're Not the Kind*; *Blues on My Mind*; *Stablemates*; *Thursday's Theme*; *An Afternoon in Paris*; *Calgary*.

Benny Golson is one of my favorite writers and one of the most melodic around. He has a fine sense of harmonic structure, but he doesn't let melody suffer because of the harmony. As a tenor player, he gets a good big sound on his horn. I would sometimes like to hear a more simple solo line

from him; if he did that, I think that his phrases with multitudes of notes wouldn't suffer from a lack of contrast.

I have heard Lucky Thompson called a major influence on Benny, but I would say Don Byas was, more than Lucky. By now, Benny has developed in his scales to a point of great harmonic freedom—in the direction of the broadening begun by Sonny Rollins and then carried on by Coltrane.

Lee Morgan is the best trumpet player for his age I have heard; he never ceases to amaze me with his ability. Lee does remind me of Clifford Brown sometimes, although I didn't hear Brownie when he was that young. For actually trying to play the trumpet, Lee deserves a lot of credit. There are some things that he doesn't play as cleanly as he seems to want to, but he is not afraid to make a mistake. I like his tone and his openness a great deal, especially in the lower register. I expect and hope that he will continue the way he is going, which seems to be to use more thoughtfulness and clarity in his playing and not to play a phrase just to see if he can do it.

I have always admired Ray Bryant's piano, but on his solos here he gives me the feeling of a man trying to get out from under the drummer.

Percy Heath is largely responsible for the kind of bass playing that usually goes with the style of playing on this record; that is with the style you usually hear in the East. I think that it's a good way to play bass. But I would have liked to hear him more clearly than I did on this record. I think it's the engineer's fault. Percy is not a loud bass player but a beautiful one, and his work can be drowned by too much turbulence from the rest of the rhythm section.

Philly Joe Jones is one of my favorite drummers to hear, but I wish there were a way that drummers of his capabilities could be exposed without hampering the possibilities for subtlety and contrast in volume of the other players. In a big band, I don't think this problem would exist, but in small groups I think it does. So far it has been overcome in quintets by having the drummer lay out occasionally, which I think is a good idea. Of course if a drummer can play, he wants to play the best he can at all times. But sometimes what is best to him seems a little too strong for the other members of a group; it can force them to struggle to be heard, to stay on top.

The recording generally represents a certain style which has been called "Hard bop" "East Coast" etc. It is a mixture of things from several eras, actually, but by now it is a tradition in itself. The major sources of the style are Brownie, Miles, Horace, Rollins, Coltrane, Blakey, Max, Philly Joe, Percy Heath, and a few others. They are

all individuals who have their own abilities, and who are not afraid to do things a bit differently. Many have been strengthened by the work these men did, but there is a danger of conformity or complacency in this style and collectively in the various groups who play it. Players cannot afford to settle for only the proven and accepted in any style of jazz, or the style will just stop developing, as "Dixieland" did. On this lp, the men were striving, and challenging themselves, but I don't hear any intent to do anything different with the style itself. But for what it is, it is a good record.

Art Farmer

#### BILLIE HOLIDAY: "Songs for Distinguished Lovers". Verve MGV-8257.

Billie Holiday, Vocals; Harry Edison, trumpet; Ben Webster, tenor saxophone; Jimmy Rowles, piano; Barney Kessel, guitar; Red Mitchell, bass; Alvin Stoller, drums.

Personnel (not listed on jacket)

*Day In Day Out*; *A Foggy Day*; *Stars Fell on Alabama*; *One For My Baby*; *Just One of These Things*; *I Didn't Know What Time It Was*.

On too many of her last albums Billie was not accompanied by the kind of group she deserved; it was usually a case of singer versus everybody else: Billie wearily working her way through a swamp which, as often as not, included strings and a harp. This album is an exception. Billie was backed here by a four-piece rhythm section and two horns: trumpet and tenor. Norman Granz has for some reason left the personnel unmentioned, and from the outside, the album looks just like one of those string-section jobs aimed at the pop public. Granz's neglect seems strange, considering that the players have plenty of solo space, in some cases almost as much as Billie herself, and particularly strange when you put the record on and realize that the horns are Harry Edison and Ben Webster (this is what my ear says; I won't get hung-up making a guess at the others, who are not so obvious). There are six tracks, all fairly long. The tunes are standards, slow or medium in tempo. Billie's singing varies in quality throughout the set. It varies from chorus to chorus, and sometimes even from bar to bar, so certain tracks can't be selected as more worthy or less worthy than others. Fine phrases and inflections occur alongside phrases which are not so fine—phrases which seem shadows or caricatures of what Billie could really do. Those once unutterably poignant touches, a slight hesitation hitting a note, a perfect use of vibrato (none at all on the beginning of a note, then widening out), bending a note a little to break your heart, these became too often

exaggerated, and sound a little affected. She sometimes liked to wait a bit too long before coming in on a phrase, then has to rush a few words to catch up. A singer singing words can't afford to be as liberal with rests as somebody playing a horn unless some words are left out. She had become fond of a few gimmicks, for instance a low, hoarse, Louis-like growl which is no part of her natural style. Worst of all, that perfect vibrato in places is a little sloppy, a little too wobbly. These are the faults. The virtues are what they always were, only a little diluted here and there. She still could hit you with a fine note or a moving phrase, and I would far rather listen to Billie today than any other singer in the idiom, any singer other than a folk-blues or gospel singer. She was still the most moving singer of ballads, and she made it now and then on this album as she should have.

The rhythm section is a pretty good one, especially the bass and drums. Both the pianist and the guitarist tend to drive a little hard; the pianist, when comping, pushes in a Peterson-like style which wasn't right for Billie, though the horns can use it properly. Billie needed someone more relaxed or maybe even more old-fashioned; of the modern pianists, a Hank Jones would have fit better. The guitarist, whoever he is, is not right for this session. He would have contributed a great deal by sticking to an even, mellow four, but he throws in annoying little blips too often, and sometimes tries playing lines under Billie.

Much of the album's strength is in Edison and Webster. Edison is better soloing than playing behind Billie since he doesn't fit his phrases to hers, and distracts rather than contributes. His solos are, as usual, clean, uncomplicated, and swinging, but blowing behind a singer is a special art. If Edison has it, he doesn't exercise it here.

Webster, on the other hand, has it and exercises it. He rolls long, oblique lines out under Billie's voice, sounding like the whole Ellington sax section of Webster days. The lines he plays here sound very similar (in style, not in choice of notes) to some that Ellington scored for that section; I don't know which one learned from the other. A good example here is on *Day In, Day Out*; when Webster came in behind Billie the whole character of the performance changed. He provided a tremendous lift. Solo, he seems to play fewer notes than he once did, and those notes are less even, accented with more care and variety. Webster, more than any other tenor, can change his tone to fit his needs; he can be soft or harsh at the same volume. The finest moments in the album for me, are when he is blowing.

Maitland Edey

#### THE MASTERSOUNDS: "Ballads and Blues". World Pacific WP-1260.

Buddy Montgomery, vibes; Richie Crabtree, piano; Monk Montgomery, electric bass; Benny Barth, drums.

Blues Medley (Bluesology, Purple Sounds, Fontessa), Heidi, Little Stevie, Solar, How Deep Is the Ocean, Monk's Ballard, Mint Julep, The Champ.

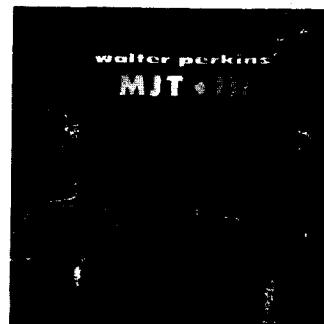
This is one of those records which contain a few short passages of beauty and emotion surrounded by choruses of cliché-ridden, carefully stylish, mechanical playing. Aside from the general complaint, I find that the group has two specific failings:

- 1) They don't play well together, that is, as a cohesive unit.
- 2) They sound superficially very much like either the Modern Jazz Quartet (on blues and up originals) or like the early Shearing quintet (on the lush ballads). The MJQ influence is the stronger, evident in some of the writing and particularly in the playing of Buddy Montgomery, who is the most faithful (and best) imitator of Milt Jackson I've ever heard.

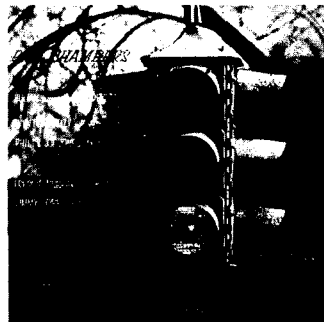
There is certainly nothing inherently wrong with one group trying to sound like another; the trouble in this case is that the Mastersounds fall so far short of their models. In addition, they somehow manage to give the impression, correct or incorrect, that they aim at the MJQ style, not because it's that natural inevitable one for them, but because it happens to be in fashion at the moment. Only Buddy Montgomery never plays a pretentious or silly phrase. Given his natural Jackson-based style, it might seem understandable to work towards an MJQ-like group style. But that style is a very individual one, so much so that it even tends to get a little precious sometimes. It's not a style very many vibes-piano-bass-drums quartets would have evolved naturally, or would feel really comfortable working in. Trying to do so, the Mastersounds end up sounding just a little false.

The first failing, that they don't play well together, seems to be predominantly Richie Crabtree's problem. Though his ballad chording under Buddy Montgomery is capable enough, he tends to fall apart comping on blues or anything medium or fast. It's not a technical difficulty; it's just that he hasn't learned to put down an accompaniment that supports, rather than trips, a soloist. He distracts. He drops things in the wrong places and gets in the way, giving the group an unbalanced, seasick sound, confused and out of control, very different from the liquid clarity of the MJQ ensemble. Benny Barth is not a particularly resourceful drummer. He seems to be

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at a loss as to what to do, particularly on the middle tempos, where he sounds chunky rather than flowing. A clever drummer can contribute a powerful sense of form by building a different sound for each soloist, varying his choruses, preparing entrances, etc. Barth hasn't moved in this direction at all. Instead he seems to rely on a stock of standard ideas and techniques, not always using them when needed or fitting. The worst and most obvious of these is a kind of abortive shuffle rhythm. The two Montgomerys are in a different class. Buddy, as noted, is based on Milt Jackson; the grace notes, the bending of phrases, the fragile hesitations are all very much like Jackson's. Montgomery's touch is lighter, and he avoids Jackson's only ugly idiosyncrasy: that slow, grinding, electronic vibrato on ballads. His phrasing is delicate and full of blues. Monk Montgomery is steady and has some good lines. He tends to favor large leaps in unexpected places. The sound of his instrument, electric bass, is very distinctive; the notes tend to carry longer and don't fade as fast. Whether you like it or not is a matter of taste. The instrument's great advantage is that it is fretted, so the player has no pitch trouble; he is never slightly sharp or flat.

There are three ballads, **How Deep Is the Ocean**, **Monk's Ballad** (by Monk Montgomery), and **Heidi** (by Crabtree). **How Deep** is treated conservatively; Buddy gets off several lovely, soaring lines, otherwise sticks closely to melody and embellishment. **Monk's Ballad** begins with an introductory piano quote from the **Warsaw Concerto** or something reminiscent of it. I would suspect that this was a joke, except that the rest of the track is quite sober and straight-faced; it's one of those things which serve to alienate the most patient listener. The ballad has an original and moving bridge, though, handled by Buddy with feeling. **Heidi** has a piano solo showing a Billy Taylor influence in places. **Mint Julep** is the heartbreaker of the set. It's a twelve-bar blues with a bridge, written by Rudolph Toombes. As written, the first eight bars have a syncopated, almost Spanish bass line played unison by piano and bass, over which Buddy has a light, funky melody line. The last four and the bridge use a walking bass and Crabtree's usual comping. It's a heartbreaker because those first eight bars, light and balanced, promise so much emotionally, and the promise isn't kept. For a moment the Mastersounds almost touch the eternal blues; but then, after the first eight bars, Crabtree becomes fashionably crisp and cute, and Barth comes down, chunk, chunk, every two and four. Buddy solos well; he would

have been unobstructed if Crabtree had sat out.

Of the remaining tracks, **The Champ**, **Little Stevie**, and the **Bluesology** part of the blues medley are the most interesting. **The Champ** has an introduction by Barth; he brings in the theme with a **Salt Peanuts** quote. They get a good Dizzy strut. Buddy has two choruses without piano, but doesn't sound quite comfortable at the tempo. Crabtree riffs under him for the rest of the solo, providing obstacles rather than support. Crabtree's own solo is unpretentious, may be his best on the album. There is almost a false start on **Bluesology**, and five fine choruses of Buddy with the rhythm section under control. The rest of the medley is painful. **Little Stevie**, written by Monk Montgomery, has pleasing minor resolutions; it shows a strong John Lewis influence. First Monk then Buddy state the theme. Monk's next solo begins very well, but even one of the Montgomerys fails at last; he gives us, in his second chorus a straight dose of **Istanbul, Not Constantinople**. After beautiful blue Buddy and fair Crabtree (always stylish, never committed emotionally), there is an abrupt change of tone. Barth sets up a crisp cymbal pattern, Monk enters, John Lewis appears, smiling, in the control room window, Buddy and Crabtree enter, and we are in the middle of one of those baroque-flavored things.

Maitland Edey

#### STUFF SMITH: "Sweet swingin' Stuff". 20th Fox 3008.

Smith, violin; John Letman, trumpet; James Jones, piano; George Duvivier, bass; Denzil Best, drums. **La Cinquanteine**, **O Promise Me**, **To a Wild Rose**, **I Love You Truly**, **Humoresque**, **Home on the Range**, **Mighty Lak a Rose**, **A Bird in a Gilded Cage**, **Hearts and Flowers**, **Medley: Buffalo Gals—On the Banks of the Wabash; Blue Tail Fly, Gypsy Love Song. After the Ball.**

Stuff both plays and sings here with about equal space and billing. His singing is deeply offensive: cynical, unmusical performances based on the cheapest aspects of Louis' vocal style. His playing, while far more pleasant than his singing, leaves me totally unmoved. His technique is inadequate; his pitch is erratic, sometimes as much as a quarter-tone off; his vibrato is coarse and clumsy, a relic of what some people in the entertainment business used to think was a hot jazz sound. Most annoying is his tendency to slip his finger up a string a whole fifth at the end of a phrase; he can't play a chorus without throwing in this gimmick. It is precisely the same device that the man uses in the **Hot Canary**. Stuff swings well

on rare brief phrases, but tends to ruin any momentum with a few badly placed notes at the end. For his own sake, this set should not have been issued.

He is accompanied by John Letman, an unimaginative edition of some of Roy Eldridge's less successful work, and by an unjustly magnificent rhythm section: Jimmy Jones, George Duvivier, and Denzil Best. Jones has a few choruses, none particularly memorable, but each standing out like a little oasis. The choice of tunes helps no one very much.

Maitland Edey

#### JIMMY AND MAMA YANCEY:

"Pure Blues". Atlantic 1283.

Yancey, piano; Israel Crosby, bass.

Mournful Blues; Yancey Special;

How Long Blues; Yancey's Bugle Call; 35th and Dearborn; Shave 'em Dry; Salute to Pinetop.

Estelle "Mama" Yancey, vocal; Jimmy

Yancey, piano; Israel Crosby, bass.

Make Me a Pallet on the Floor; Four

O'Clock Blues; Monkey Woman Blues;

Santa Fe Blues; How Long Blues.

Just one measure. That's all it takes for anyone who has nosed into the broad bays, the tidewater and the headwaters, searching for the genuine and the spurious examples of this thing called jazz, to feel the presence of a master of the jazz beat, the jazz attack (inflection), using only that piano technique which is necessary to the realization of the Yancey ideas. Sure it's a self-taught technique that we have here (in **Mournful Blues** one of his feet reposes on the pedal, presenting us with a blues **Cathedral Engloutie**), but his ideas are honestly drawn from his background. That environment included the rail center of Chicago, the plaintive hymn-like phrases made out of tremoloed sixth (**Mournful**), coupled with grace-noted triads that rock with the fervor of a devout religious believer, and, perhaps most of all, the art of creating primary and secondary themes and phrases culled from Yancey's long experience as buck-and-wing dancer, and his subsequent avocation as pianist for countless Chicago house-rent parties where he was sure to be aware of original tap-dance variations. **Bugle Call** exemplifies these tap-dance figures as they spill out of his right hand, while the left pursues a Charleston bass with some boogie woogie patterns.

It is the impact of one hand against the other that gives Yancey's playing a real holographic character, as may be discerned by comparing Meade Lux Lewis' Decca version of the **Yancey Special** with this one. Yancey's right hand phrases in 12/8 time, with all of its attendant possibilities of triplets, triplet



syncopations, grace-noted triplets, and fragments of tied triplets. Simultaneous rhythmic effort is being executed by his unerring left hand in 4/4 time (with all of its habanera, Charleston figures and tied notes), and vain indeed are the strivings of imitators who try to achieve Yancey's gift of ambidextrous phrasing gift in a hurry. His apt pupil Meade Lux did absorb some of what Yancey had to offer, for one finds the same cross-rhythms of the composer's **Yancey Special** in the Old Paramount version of **Honky Tonk Train Blues** by Lux, but in most of the latter's work one feels the 4/4 drive without the equal amounts of 12/8 and I think that there you have Yancey's signal contribution. My use of this adjective is dictated by the fact that many of these blues are train blues, perhaps dictated proximity to the LaSalle St. station. The daily dinnning into one's consciousness of the sounds of driving rods, crossing gates, whistles, and Westinghouse valve gear, coupled with the temptation of the rails as a means of escape from daily social and economic problems, made the train blues a natural product of the imagination. **35th & Dearborn**, with its wonderfully paced bass boogie, legato, and its 12/8 grace-noted whistle effects, is one of the more poignant ones: the listener can actually hear the big Mikado chuffing along easily down the Rock Island line.

Part of the distinctive holograph that is Yancey's lies in his touch, and in the nuances of his keyboard attack. Not only does he underline the main idea, but he also sub-titles the subordinate fill-in figures. To get some idea of his subtlety at nuance, one has only to turn to some train blues by his "students," Cripple Clarence Lofton and Meade Lux Lewis. Compared to their highly rhythmical but mechanical drive, Jimmy's raggedy blues utterances are evoked with poetic feeling. In **Mournful** there is the homely, rooted domesticity that has been felt by Charles Ives and Virgil Thomson; on side 2 it is further borne out by Mama Yancey, her husband's piano and the clipped bass of Israel Crosby. **Monkey Woman** brings forth Mama's sing-song Negro *sprechstimme*, upbraiding another woman, while **How Long** finds her plaintive, re-iterative whine expounding on her capacity for absorbing marital trouble. Still another blues of complaint, **Four O'Clock**, has the chastising voice of the dutiful wife in strict observance of moral protocol. Crosby and Yancey deftly brush in the background here, softly delineating the coming home at four in the morning in light accompaniment, so that the slightly spurned woman will hear her man come in. Estella Yancey does well with the "mistreated" role.

Jimmy shares the glory of **Santa Fe**, with his opening chorus, full of syncopated devices that depict the quiet coasting rhythms of a Santa Fe train, as he does in the first chorus of **Make Me a Pallet**. In slurring a note down from the minor third to the tonic, and cutting the tonic off extremely short, Mama employs a Negro blues characteristic that is not only effective emotionally, but also allows the rhythmic accompaniment to shine through. Although the performances themselves are not quite the match of their Session, Solo-Art and Victor records made ten to twelve years before these, all of the old artistry is there, and with a bit more fidelity.

Charles Payne Rogers

**"MODERN JAZZ CONCERT: Six Compositions commissioned by the 1957 Brandeis University Festival of the Arts".** Columbia WL 127.

Personnel: Hal McKusick and John La Porta, saxes; Louis Mucci and Art Farmer, trumpets; Jimmy Knepper, trombone; Robert DiDomenica, flute; Manuel Ziegler, bassoon; Bill Evans, piano; Teddy Charles, vibes; Joe Benjamin, bass; Margaret Ross, harp; James Buffington, French horn; Barry Galbraith, guitar; Teddy Sommer, drums. George Russell, *All About Rosie*; Harold Shapero, *On Green Mountain* (Chaconne after Monteverdi); Jimmy Giuffre, *Suspensions*; Charlie Mingus, *Revelations*; Milton Babbitt, *All Set*; Gunther Schuller, *Transformation*.

One of the remarkable things about the Brandeis Jazz Concert recording is that it ever took place at all. As Gunther Schuller mentions in his liner notes, it could not have taken place ten years ago. In that short period the acceptance of jazz as an art by the public and musicians alike has been so rapid that composers and performers of this calibre have been able to work and develop in an increasingly favorable climate of opinion. We are still in the earliest of beginnings, but at least we are on the way, and I fervently hope that Columbia will continue to serve as an example of the good work that can be done by a large corporation. Much has been said (and will be said) about George Russell's Lydian System of Tonal Organization, but of course is not the technique which is important to the audience. What does matter is that Russell is able to use his system to produce an amazing variety of tonal color. Listen to the second movement of *All About Rosie*, where he displays a masterful control of his material, moving through a variety of shifting tonal areas, yet always retaining the essence of blues feeling. And again in the opening of the up-tempo third

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movement where changing instrumental sounds evolve into a rocking Basie-like swing.

Russell's system is also important in that he can give such a good improvisational basis to his soloists. Bill Evans' piano solo in the third movement is an unsurpassed example of the unity that can exist between the composed and improvisational sections of a piece of music. It is also a remarkable testament to the developing skills of this influential young pianist.

Harold Shapero's *On Green Mountain* is not only an 'unforgivable pun' on the name of Monteverdi, but possibly also an unforgivable joke at the expense of jazz composition. I can't agree with Gunther Schuller's description of this work as an "improvisation by jazz musicians on 'classical' thematic and harmonic material." Although the first and last sections, which surround the improvisations, are interesting examples of what a contemporary composer can do with a somewhat archaic form, the center section is simply an AABA up-tempo blowing episode. Shapero has made it more difficult for his soloists by insisting that the trumpet and trombone adhere closely to a banal Monteverdi theme (which is faintly reminiscent of the 'Anvil Chorus') in the first part of their solos. It has always seemed to me that the jazz composer must be more concerned with the idea of giving the improviser free rein than with the imposition of more restrictions. Shapero's reasons for violating the soloists' freedom just don't seem to be justified by the material that he presents them with.

*Suspensions*, the Jimmy Giuffre work, improves with each listening. It is composed throughout, with no improvisation, but Giuffre has managed to overcome some of the difficulties of our inadequate notation system to project, at times, the feelings of a completely integrated group effort. The composition consists of three basic sections organized into a general ABA relationship. The first and last sections make extensive use of a whole tone and minor third accompaniment figure used beneath a blues-tinged melodic line. In the center section he introduces a 5/4 ostinato bass and then proceeds to build up steam with a rocking 4/4 theme swinging through the top instruments. The original thematic germ is then recapitulated to close the composition. Giuffre's strength as an orchestrator is abundantly in evidence and in places the tonal color which he achieves is as striking as anything on the album.

Despite the fact that Charlie Mingus' *Revelations* has a recognizably orthodox external form, like much of his work it sometimes imparts the feeling of a stream-of-consciousness technique. He is an naturalistic

composer and is often concerned with form and technique only as adjuncts to the emotional development of his work. At times this is a very great strength indeed, as in the truly moving first section of this work. Listen in particular to the lovely passage for horn and bass, and again to the almost Broadway-folksy section which immediately follows it. Mingus is a composer who (unlike so many others) feels through his fingers. It is a rare attribute.

The next section, a group improvisation, is not as successful as one might desire, although it is worth probing through the cacophony to pick up the really humorous trombone work of Jimmy Knepper. Following this is a recapitulation and, according to Schuller, an improvised ending. The ending is an excellent example (in contrast to the earlier group effort) of what such a method can achieve among empathetic musicians.

If Milton Babbitt's composition *All Set* is to be considered a jazz work then it must be done so primarily because it is performed by jazz musicians. In this sense, perhaps, we may have come full circle, in that one of the traditional strengths of jazz has been embodied in the ability of the individual musician to modify and interpret the composed music in a manner which he feels best satisfies his own artistic intentions. The work is uncompromising and difficult, both to perform and to hear. Although he makes extensive use of the fragmented serial composition technique which is so influential among the younger "classical" composers, Babbitt has been careful to avoid some of the difficulties which have plagued "serious" composers when they have attempted to write jazz. Instead of adhering to the conception which views jazz as an imperfect combination of the diametrically opposed elements of vertical melody-harmony and horizontal rhythm, he has permitted his thematic groups to employ rhythms which are implicit in their nature. Thus the significance of each note as a part of an organic musical framework is emphasized, and the rhythmic impetus which is derived is implied by the most forceful natural means. There are, as Schuller notes, 'many rare and subtle tonal experiences' in this music, and repeated listening will bring forth more.

Although Gunther Schuller's *Transformations* is a competent, interestingly conceived work, I can't agree that it even begins to satisfy the problem which he has set for himself (i.e. "the amalgamation of jazz and classical music"). What does happen is a kind of 'transformation' from a conventionally composed section to an improvised episode, and, finally, a juxtaposition of the two. In most cases, however,

the two remain separate entities and never really give a complete feeling of integration. What is more important, I think, is the means and methods which Schuller has used. He is very nearly on the verge of making a breakthrough to a point where composing techniques formerly associated with "classical" music will be used to project jazz works. Thus both jazz and "classical" music will have the common goal of producing an "art music" unlimited by parochial considerations.

Let's hope that the visionary foresight of the Brandeis Festival sponsors will continue to influence future promoters of such events. Under such benign conditions and with the exciting stimulus thereby offered, jazz cannot help but prosper, develop and grow.

Don Heckman

---

**HANK MOBLEY, BILL ROOT, CURTIS FULLER, LEE MORGAN: "Another Monday Night at Birdland". Roulette R-52022.**

Mobley, tenor sax; Billy Root, tenor sax; Curtis Fuller, trombone; Lee Morgan, trumpet; Specs Wright, drums; Ray Bryant, piano; Tommy Bryant, bass.

*It's You Or No One*; Jamph; Nutville; Wee.

By far the most immediate of the jazzman's barnful of problems is that of having to produce his art daily between certain hours at certain places for combinations of people that are shuffled before him like a worn-out pack of cards. Whether he is in the mood mentally or physically to create, or whether the surroundings are conducive to his act of creation, is of importance to no one save the jazzman himself—and, of course, he doesn't count. The classical musician has weeks to practice for a concert, or has at least the assurance of knowing he can depend on a score written by someone else. The painter, if dissatisfied, can toss a picture aside and begin again, or paint over the old. And the working schedule of the painter or classical musician is more or less up to him. In jazz alone of all the arts, the artist is required to produce by a clock, in an on-again, off-again assembly-line procedure, before audiences which are, to say the least, unspeakably rude. And it is in jazz alone, too, that the artist, like a vending machine, must promptly and efficiently eject the brand of packaged art for which the buying audience has exchanged its coins. And not to be overlooked is the atmosphere in which most of jazz is manufactured (and in which someone like Bach would have had a lovely time concocting instant fugues): dreary cubicles of depression, housing

an inattentive conglomeration of individuals who fill the spaces not taken up by transient barmaids. Although a disturbing number of patrons of jazz clubs are present for purposes other than hearing jazz, the jazz artist's dilemma is further heightened by the fact that occasionally jazz lovers do happen to be quietly and inconspicuously seated amidst the attending menagerie and hang on to every note played. So that while the jazzman may be discouraged, even disgusted, by the average club audience, he cannot afford to let down his musical standards because of it—not just out of respect to the chance visit of a perceptive and interested critic, but out of respect to himself and his reputation which is in the hands of these chance visitors: the fan who passes the word along orally, the critic who does so in print. And, unlike the painter, the jazzman is not able to throw a bad solo on his private scrap heap; if he plays badly, he does it in public.

This problem came to mind as I listened to "Another Monday Night at Birdland." I was not particularly impressed with the album, the playing was so loose it failed to captivate me and hold me either by melodic inspiration or by technical display. And yet, to anyone who has been to Birdland and taken in its atmosphere himself, it would be a wonder if the results on this album has been otherwise, for at Birdland, the problem discussed in the preceding paragraphs is operating full blast. In such an environment, all one can do is blow, and that is what the musicians do here. This Monday night group, in its second such recorded venture, sounds as if "Another Monday Night at Birdland" took place on the same Monday night as the first "Monday Night at Birdland." If this looks redundant on paper, then it is because in both albums the group sounds pretty much that way, too.

In person this Monday night session would entertain painlessly and spiritedly for the duration of the sets, and would give the added privilege of watching the musicians in a live performance. Away from the club musical attention would be focused elsewhere. Possibly that is the trouble with this Birdland album: once heard, one has no desire to hear it again.

Returning to the problem, one wonders how these musicians could possibly turn out any music of originality, inspiration, innovation or lyricism under the induced labor of recorded club sets or you-will-play-at-10-o'clock-sharp-on-Monday jam sessions. Not that good music has not and will not come from clubs, but to capture it on a recording would involve nightly vigils

with a tape recorder for enough nights to catch a really good one—the rare occasion when musicians and listeners respond to each other and the music falls almost fatalistically into place. Too often, albums arbitrarily recorded on-the-spot were not cut on one of these good nights.

Though many musicians prefer the relaxation of a club, despite its handicaps, to the formality of concerts or the chill of recording studios, the club—its audiences and working conditions—is one of the dilemmas of jazz as a way of art, and the appearance of this Birdland album somehow reveals the problem musically within the circumference of a twelve inch lp.

Mimi Clar

#### "THE JAZZ SOUL OF PORGY AND BESS", Conducted, Orchestrated and Arranged by Bill Potts. United Artists UAL 4032.

Art Farmer, Harry Edison, Bernie Glow, Markie Markowitz, Charlie Shavers, trumpets; Bob Brookmeyer, Frank Rehak, Jimmy Cleveland, Earl Swope, Rod Levitt, trombones; Sol Schlinger, baritone sax; Zoot Sims, Al Cohn, tenors; Phil Woods, Gene Quill, altos; Herbie Powell, guitar; Charlie Persip, drums; Bill Evans, piano; George Duvivier, bass. Summertime; A Woman Is A Sometime Thing; My Man's Gone Now; It Takes A Long Pull to Get There; I Got Plenty O' Nuttin'; Bess, You Is My Woman; It Ain't Necessarily So; Medley (Prayer; Strawberries; Honey Man; Crab Man); I Loves You, Porgy; Clara, Clara; There's A Boat Dat's Leavin' Soon For New York; Oh Bess, Oh Where's My Bess; Oh Lawd, I'm On My Way.

The only recorded version which could, by any valid definition of the word, be called the "jazz soul" of Porgy And Bess would have to be the Evans-Davis collaboration on Columbia. Despite this, the performance of this interpretation is outstanding. Although the band is composed primarily of the same studio men who make up most of the New York recording sessions, they play here with a crackling authority that is rare in bands that have not been together for a long time.

Potts' arrangements are, at times, exceptionally skillful examples of orchestration, chock-full of the best professional jazz techniques. He uses his devices brashly and confidently, and there is no question of his ability to project a feeling to his musicians which urges them into roaring excitement. The trouble is that the emotional impact is surface, and very little is stated by implication. The passion of the score is never touched except in the most superficial

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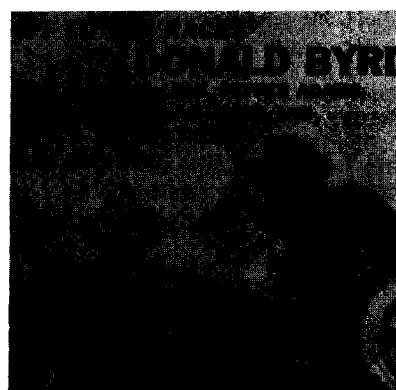
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manner. **Summertime** as a full-voiced up-tempo swinger just doesn't accede to the meaning and spirit of the original, in which it is used as an introduction to Catfish Row as a way of life.

This lack of involvement with the emotional currents of the opera makes the scheduling of numbers in performance order superfluous. There is no unifying thread joining the sections either stylistically or emotionally. In **I Got Plenty O' Nuttin**, for instance, Gershwin's original rhythmic motive is retained, but the character of the tune is then distorted by an anachronistic set of canonic imitations. In **I Loves You, Porgy**, Bill Evans' piano solo moves for four bars over an absolutely static harmonic base. Although this seems to be intentional, the logic behind such a distortion of the source material is never justified as the arrangement continues. Then the lovely opening of **Oh Bess, Oh Where's My Bess?** is superseded by some of the most blatant stock arranging tricks (Open brass over a sax 'obbligato': unison trombones pumping out rhythmic figures). The final ignominy is the attempt in the liner notes to inform us that Potts' arrangement of **Oh Lawd, I'm On My Way** will lead the listener to believe that "Porgy will surely make it to New York to find his Bess." Well, if such positivism can be carried by a basic up-tempo swinger, with solos around the sections, then all is well. But I'm afraid I can't agree. The implication of the opera, (and it is an extremely pertinent implication) is that Porgy will not recapture Bess, and it is this triumph of despair which emphasizes its pathetic beauty. This denouement is never achieved in the Potts' score. Nevertheless, there is still a lot of good old-fashioned blowing on the album. Art Farmer stands out, as he has on practically all of his recent performances. His delightfully conceived solo on **I Loves You, Porgy** is strongly reminiscent of that picaresque quality that Dizzy could get in his early ballad work. And Bob Brookmeyer (who has gained immeasurably in his command of the instrument) is alternatively gutty and wistful; listen to his solo on **Oh Bess, Oh Where's My Bess**. The sax section achieves an amalgamation of sound which has been far too rare for the past ten years or so. Their work on **A Woman Is A Sometimes Thing** reminded me of that tight, single horn quality that was characteristic of the old Benny Goodman sections. Avoid the pretensions of the liner notes (and title) and accept it for what it is; a happy non-experimental, swinging big band. The production of the album, by the way, is superb. United Artists has apparently spared no expense in presenting an attractive package,

complete with some good photographs and a fairly accurate description of solos and personnel (the notable exception being an unlisted solo by Art Farmer on **I Got Plenty O' Nuttin**). Perhaps with luck it may even turn out to be the last jazz version of **Porgy and Bess**. Enough's enough.

Don Heckman

#### "DOWN BEAT JAZZ CONCERT, VOL. 2". Dot, DLP 3188.

**Blues Over Easy**—Manny Albam and His Jazz Greats:

Bernie Glow, Nick Travis, Ernie Royal, trumpets; Frank Rehak, Jim Dahl, Tommy Mitchell, trombones; Al Cohn, tenor saxophone; Gene Quill, alto saxophone; Pepper Adams, baritone saxophone; Jerome Richardson, flute, tenor saxophone; Dick Katz, piano; Milt Hinton, bass; Osie Johnson, drums. Soloists: George Auld, tenor saxophone; Hal McKusick, bass clarinet; Dick Katz and Steve Allen, piano; Paul Horn, alto saxophone.

**Scrapple from the Apple**—Tony Scott Quintet: Scott, baritone saxophone; Jimmy Knepper, trombone; Kenny Burrell, guitar; Sam Jones, bass; Paul Motian, drums.

**Rose Room**—Steve Allen Quartet:

Allen, piano; George Auld, tenor saxophone; Milt Hinton, bass; Osie Johnson, drums.

**Dougy's Buggy**—Don Elliot Quintet:

Don Elliot, trumpet, vibes; Hal McKusick, bass clarinet; Doug Watkins, bass; Bob Corwin, piano; Nick Stabulas, drums.

**Fast Thing in C**—Steve Allen Trio:

Steve Allen, piano; Osie Johnson, drums; Milt Hinton, bass.

Fortunately for me, I did not attend the concert at which this was made. But the record itself is sufficient testimony that for the promoters jazz was a term used to sell tickets. Actually, the whole affair could be dismissed by simply calling it a mess, but certain features of the thing deserve to be examined, if only to delineate the outlines of this sort of cultural blight. I will glance at each selection in turn.

**Blues Over Easy**: Manny Albam is a curious, but all too typical, phenomenon. To that mass of record buyers, concert-goers, and poll-voters to whom jazz means André Previn, Stan Kenton, Woody Herman, and Peter Gunn (twenty years ago this sort of audience was really excited about Ziggy Elman), Albam is one of the arrangers in the select company of Ralph Burns, Pete Rugolo, and Neal Hefti. His title to this exalted position is clear and unambiguous; his work is trite, derivative, and uninteresting. Albam is only too representative of those big band arrangers from the mid-forties who derived their only vital ideas from the innovators at work at the time,

and then, to compound things, diluted them until they became palatable to a mass audience. I don't mean to say that Albam, or any of the other people referred to, is, in any sense, an intellectually dishonest musician. He undoubtedly works quite sincerely and honestly at jazz. All the same, the result is unoriginal and dull. Work of this sort lends itself admirably to the efforts of the new jazz promoters and publicists who aim at an audience to whom the more advanced and significant works of a Russell or Monk, for instance, are meaningless. It is interesting to note that Albam has seven lps on the market under his own name, while George Russell has one. There is a moral here, but I hesitate to draw it; cynicism about recording companies and promoters comes too easily to me these days.

For this concert Albam evidently decided to work in the Basie style and so turned the appropriate faucet. What came out was a mass of tedious riffs unrelieved by any subtlety of dynamics or section work. Several soloists, such as George Auld and Paul Horn, blew dully and to no purpose. The pièce de résistance came when Steve Allen sat at the same piano with Dick Katz. At this point words become simply inadequate to describe the results. One's sympathy for Katz is boundless.

I suggest, for the next **Down Beat** bash, that Albam compose a **concerto grosso** for Stan Kenton and the Dukes of Dixieland. This to be followed by an encore played by Steve Allen and Joe "Fingers" Carr at the same piano and at the same time. Tickets should really move for that, and it might even settle the cold war.

**Scrapple from the Apple**: Here we have Tony Scott making Tony Scott noises on the baritone saxophone rather than the clarinet. It is still pretty dull. Jimmy Knepper turns in some surprisingly sloppy work. I, for one, hold rather high hopes for Knepper, and it is disturbing to hear him play this badly. But just being in this concert at all must have been a disconcerting experience.

**Rose Room**: This one puts us back with Steve Allen. I don't know how to describe Allen as a pianist.

"Amateur" struck me, at first, as an apt term, but this would be unfair to deserving amateur musicians. What can one say of a pianist who has neither technique nor ideas? It is obvious why Allen was on hand for the concert; his hip television program personality guaranteed the presence of thousands of discerning devotees of the art. George Auld and everyone else play badly.

**Give Me the Simple Life**: Paul Horn shows up here as the tritest flutist in jazz. Katz, possibly suffering from trauma, plays competently, but not with the skill which one has

come to expect from him. I suppose bland would best describe this one. **Dougy's Buggy:** We have here the edifying spectacle of Don Elliot making noises meant to sound, presumably, like Miles Davis. They don't, but they are bad. Elliot, sparing us nothing, also plays the vibes, but neither Milt Jackson nor Red Norvo should worry. Hal McKusick contributes a few good moments, but his voice is as one crying in the wilderness.

**Fast Thing in C:** Steve Allen returns as a boogie woogie pianist with absolutely no comprehension of the style. But, then, even simple competence is, I suppose, too much to expect.

This entire review has amounted to a long *caveat emptor*. It is only fair to note that excellent musicians such as McKusick, Katz, and Watkins are, here, simply overwhelmed by mediocrity. Also, the drumming of Osie Johnson, usually dependable sets a new standard in sloppiness. The record has notes by Dom Cerulli in a golly-it-was-great style.

H. A. Woodfin

#### THE SEVEN AGES OF JAZZ, produced by Leonard Feather. Metrojazz 2-E1009.

Various: Brownie McGhee; Willie "The Lion" Smith; Don Elliott; Tyree Glenn; Dick Hyman; Don Lamond; Milt Hinton; Buck Clayton; Coleman Hawkins; George Auld; Billie Holiday; Maxine Sullivan.

I'm Gonna Tell God How You Treat Me; Take This Hammer; See See Rider; Maple Leaf Rag; Tiger Rag; Dippermouth Blues; Sneak Away; Singing The Blues; It Don't Mean a Thing; Stompin' At The Savoy; Honky Tonk Train Blues; Monday Date; Ain't Misbehavin'; After You've Gone; I Wished On The Moon; Lover Man; One O'clock Jump; I'm Beginning To See The Light; If I Could Be With You; Groovin' High; Stuffy; Indiana; Blue and Sentimental; I Cover The Waterfront; Indian Summer; Vibes Impressions; Jazz Lab; I'm Gonna Tell God How You Treat Me.

There are several commentators who think that jazz is best approached as a kind of musical vaudeville, and the more honest among them frankly admit it.

Well, Cab Calloway's prancing and shouting, the late Sidney Bechet's bit of taking his clarinet to pieces—and for that matter most of what Ted Lewis does—are fine vaudeville, no doubt, but they aren't very interesting musically. And Armstrong and Gillespie are interesting musically, sometimes despite their vaudeville. Maybe this is worth going on with for a bit: all folklore is not art, but a lot of pre-jazz and early jazz was art. All vaudeville, even a lot of good vaudeville, is not art, but a lot of jazz of the thirties (which had the overt function of being what we can

loosely call vaudeville) was art. Finally, the modern jazzman (arranger or improviser) is in the most daring and dangerous position of all, for if he does not produce a music valid for its own sake (an "art music", if you will) he produces nothing whatever. He no longer fulfills the social functions of "background music" or of "show". Jazz took a precarious path in the mid-forties, and I suspect that the abiding anxieties of some of those who set it on that path may have come in part from the knowledge (conscious or not) of the very vulnerable role they were taking on for the future of their art. It is as if they were saying both for themselves and for their successors: we will make a new kind of valid "concert" music or we will perish; jazz will become a kind of art music or it will die. And if Dizzy had something to fall back on, Parker had *nothing*.

All of this talk is perhaps a way of avoiding the rather dismal prospect of reviewing the set at hand: the history of jazz as a long and tawdry vaudeville turn (why doesn't someone do the history of painting in living tableau on the Loew's circuit? it's art ain't it?) equipped with a "clever" title arrived at by considerable stretching ("folk" and "blues", "bop" and "modern" all make it as categories); and—in case anybody should miss the real tone of it all—Don Elliott doing that club act of his (as Norvo, Hamp, Gibbs, Jackson). Dick Hyman does un-swinging and presumptuous imitations of Hines, Garner, etc.

If I keep this up, I know I shall soon be carping badly, but I would also like to suggest that J.A.T.P. is not one of the most important artistic events in the recent history of jazz, and that such efforts at neo-classical jazz that Hyman's Jazz Lab allude to here are spurious—I mention those points because they persist in several accounts of "jazz history" in which Leonard Feather has been involved.

Well, if the files of Decca-Coral-Brunswick were not up to the task (see *The Jazz Review*, September), an effort by Elliot, Glenn, Hyman, etc. to play "dixieland" is an unspeakable travesty. And if you can sit through a lot of pseudo-style and a lot of pseudo-culture (it *must* be possible to discuss bop drumming without implying that all before it was boorishly monotonous), and such terrors as Buck Clayton also trying to play dixieland, you get some rewards. You get Buck Clayton and Coleman Hawkins playing beautifully on tracks representing the 'thirties and early 'forties, and you get Billie Holiday on what seems to me two of the best tracks she had made in years—and my goodness how beautifully Clayton accompanies her.

Martin Williams



Like Peck Kelly of Texas, and Joe Abernathy of New York, Buck Hammer has become a legendary figure, although to what extent the event of his untimely death contributed to the current wave of interest in him it would be at the present time hard to say. We must be wary, of course, in over-praising Hammer, or expecting too much of him. On the other hand, we must savor the contents of this album very carefully for this collection is all we have heard of Buck, or all we shall ever hear. Peck Kelly would not record at all, and eventually would not play at all. Abernathy refused to record for long periods of time but fortunately was induced to take part in several commercial sessions on a few occasions. Buck Hammer for many years refused all offers that would have involved his leaving Glen Springs, Alabama, and when he finally consented to visit Nashville, in the winter of 1956, to record these few sides he did so with no particular enthusiasm but as the result of a promise made to his brother Martin in an off-guard moment.

Available monophonic and stereo.



Hanover-Signature Record Corporation  
119 West 57th Street, N. Y. 19, N. Y.

**"Rockin' Together". Atco 33-103.**  
**Yakety Yak**; **If I Had My Life**; **Early in the Morning**; **Night Life**; **If I Had My Life to Live Over**; **Yes Sir That's My Baby**; **Splish Splash**; **Searchin'**; **Woodchopper's Ball**; **If Hurts to Love Someone**; **Confess it to Your Heart**; **Sh-boom**.

There is little need for an extended discussion of this record in this magazine. Everybody can see that it is a collection of recent popular hits. Like them or not, everybody has heard some of them, and severer spirits doubtless have pithier criticisms to offer than I. None of the selections has much to do with jazz, and it is sad to realize how little some of them have to do with human life from any point of view. It has surely been observed many times that American crowd culture succeeds most when it is most wholly divorced from the common concerns of plain existence, when it is quite deliberately divested of anything that might require a little effort on the part of the consumer, when it comes closest to warranting the label "Untouched by human hands." The most pertinent to my thesis of the above numbers is probably the version of **Woodchopper's Ball**, a grinning death's head if ever there was one; more complicated instances are the two numbers by Bobby Darin—**Splish Splash** and **Early in the Morning**, two shamelessly cynical artificially excited imitations of rock and roll so proficient that they almost compel admiration; how much decenter seems the work of Elvis Presley, even, in contrast to these foolish pieces, delivered in kind of Little Black Sambo dialect. Of course there is some enjoyment here, and occasionally the breath of life. I have always liked **Sh-boom**; even the amateurism which builds it to a premature climax, leaving the last half-chorus with nothing to do but repeat—even this seems a rather endearing trait, in these surroundings. The lyrics, too, are by no means nonsense: everybody must feel how pathetic the ellipsis: "Hello, hello again—sh-boom—And hoping we'll meet again." It is difficult to admire this expressly without giving an impression of satire; but those two lines seem as successful a description of the fragmentary, the impermanent human relationship as one might find anywhere in popular music. There is a similar pathos in **Yes Sir, That's My Baby**, though it is difficult to judge the sensations through the echo-chamber miasma that surrounds them. This is a rather churchy reworking of the old tune, carried chiefly by a girl singer who looks and sounds very young, a bit unsteady, but tasteful. Also worth mentioning are the Coasters, in two well-known and quite successful comic numbers, **Searchin'** and **Yakety Yak**. I do not find anything musical worth commenting on, but

both pieces are good low comedy, attacked with the appropriate vehemence. Apart from four numbers, the record offers little but crudeness and a sought-after monotony, appropriate, in its ghastly way, to the dim, despairing beerjoints which are its usual surroundings.

Glenn Coulter

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**"Primitive Piano". Tone Record LP 1.**  
**Speckled Red**, Billie Pierce,  
 James Robinson, Donald Suggs.  
**JIMMY AND MAMA YANCEY:**  
**"Pure Blues". Atlantic 1283.**  
 See page 42 for personnel  
 and titles.

Tone Records has given us ten numbers in the best tradition of primitive twelve bar blues; repetitive devices, missed notes, false starts and a heavy foot on the pedal when the going gets tricky. Speckled Red essays a chorus rather "advanced" in some respects at the end of **Dad's Piece**. Beyond that, however, the conception throughout this record is as safely "primitive" as the execution. Billie Pierce plays a lot of piano within this idiom. Her ideas are on a bolder scale than her technique is able to pull off, notably on the four-handed **In the Racket**. But whatever else, this lady swings! In this respect she outdoes her male colleagues on this lp. The strong work here is unquestionably hers and Speckled Red's. Between them they trot out all the strengths of primitive piano at its best—and its limitations. The other work emphasizes the limitations. Of course, it is not all a question of technique—though part of it must be. James Robinson, for example, may have some ideas, but he lacks enough technique even to let us know whether he does or not. The role of technique is an interesting thing. Jimmy Yancey, for example, has hardly more technique than Doug Suggs and Robinson and perhaps less than Billie or Speckled Red. Yancey can't even manage clearly those repeated triad figures in **Yancey's Bugle Call**. It would be embarrassing to inquire how many tunes in Yancey's total repertoire were not standard blues. Very few, I suspect. On this lp, he forges through one whole side of seven numbers, without once leaving the twelve-bar structure. With Mama singing on the other side, caution is thrown to the four winds and together they dash out into the foreign changes of **Make Me a Pallet on the Floor** and **How Long Blues**.

Yet Yancey is something several notches above the run-of-the-mill primitive piano. Repetition in his hands is effective. He extracts maximum value out of very simple rhythmic ideas. He builds a special kind of swing—not rocking like Billie Pierce or so many of the old pianists—more like that of the modernists with whom Yancey otherwise had nothing in common. All in all, Yancey's is one of the truly unique and personalized piano styles of jazz history. To say that he is "economical" is to belabor the obvious. Yet on each listening it comes home once more what an unusual feat it is to create something so meaningful out of such extreme austerity. The only other pianist who has ever approached this kind of achievement is Monk.

I should immediately emphasize that there is no comparing Yancey with Monk. Because Yancey does so much with so little, one tends to over-value the end product. A major triad painted every shade and variety of color is still a major triad. And Yancey is still a primitive pianist. Incidentally, Mama as a vocalist is difficult to get used to. She uses her voice as an instrument. How richly significant are the words in Bessie Smith's blues—**Empty Bed Blues**, for one very good example. How utterly irrelevant are the words Mama sings in the face of what she's doing with the notes. For particularly striking illustrations of this, dig the first choruses of **Four O'Clock Blues** and **How Long Blues**, especially the latter where the words could be quite moving if Mama had any interest in putting them across rather than the notes.

Guy Waterman

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**BROWNIE MCGHEE:** Brownie "McGhee Sings The Blues". Folkways 3557.

**"Blues in the Mississippi Night".**  
 United Artists 4027.

The McGhee record is, I'm certain, one of his best. It is, say, a good performance by a seasoned performer. The other, **"Blues in the Mississippi Night"**, is not even a performance . . . (except in the most literal sense . . . the same way the word "act" means two things). So, I say, the difference between these two records is "an act" vs. "the act". Brownie knows what he's doing. Two of the tunes on this record **Poor Boy**, **I Ain't Gonna Scold You** are very good Brownie, indeed. But what he does best is still "performance", "an act",



and seems, no matter how good the performance is, never to reveal much of the performer, or, as far as I'm concerned, to indicate that the "performance" is an extension of some genuinely felt emotion. All the elements of good, "moving" blues singing seem to be contained in Brownie's work except, to me, the real excitement never quite gets through. Like a mystery story without a climax; a lot of plot but no resolution. It gets dull.

I suppose the major reason for this kind of emotional void in Brownie's work is his insistence on sounding, most of the time, like a watercolor Josh White, a man who seems to me to make blues singing a kind of irritating mood music. Every tune, somehow, seems almost to end up saying "I came up the Mississippi on a boat . . . and after suffering untold horrors at the hands of you white folks . . . hyar I is right hyar at The Cafe Society". Not good. Blues singing is like any other 'art form': mere imitation, either of another artist, or of the more easily developed effects of the particular form, can never produce anything but, perhaps, a rather showy vapidness.

Opposed to Brownie's "performance", "Blues in the Mississippi Night" seems to me to be a good example of the artless "act". The merest artifice could have ruined this record. The slightest performer's self-consciousness would have reduced it to the rankest parody.

What we have is three men talking (for the most part) amongst themselves. Telling each other old, familiar lies. Lamenting familiar, yet still poignant, laments. We are aware that these people are performers only because their 'performances' are caught here on the record, frozen and 'untouched' . . . and therefore 'artificial'. But these three men have nothing to do with the world of performance. In this record you get a part of their lives . . . which is, among the world of performers, limited only to the greatest of artifice. If John Coltrane makes you feel some of the energy of his life, through his art, then you have something equal to this record.

At its best, you get a sense of 'overhearing' all the wonderful dialogue. As if you were sitting in some dumpsy old saloon in the rural deep South, and here next to you, these three jocular Negro men, lying their heads off . . . and once in a while chanting little snatches of songs they feel close to. That feeling is made priceless here.

To emphasize certain parts of the conversations (e.g. when the men are talking about the reprisals the whites took against any Negro who defied them, sometimes, as in the case mentioned, killing off whole families . . .) Alan Lomax has dubbed

in suitable music he had recorded previously. During the tales about the reprisals it is the terribly sad, terribly beautiful chant **Another Man Done Gone**. The version Lomax has here (I wonder who it was? . . . a high, flat, yet piercing, woman's voice . . . sounding as if the world had finally killed off everything she'd loved) makes you question Odetta's version. In fact, makes you not want to hear it again! There is much of the South that comes to us whole here. The South, and all it means to anybody who knows it. From the tragic tales of reprisal, rape, unbelievable injustice, to the overpowering humor the Negro has transformed these into. There are wonderful bits of typical southern Negro humor here. "Putting down" (or "on") white folks has always been the ranking, and indeed sharpest example of Negro humor . . . (e.g. telling how in some part of the South a Negro had to call white mules "Mister," and ask for Prince Albert tobacco by saying "Can I please have some Mr. Prince Albert Tobacco?" My grandfather used to tell it too . . . "What you mean, 'gimme', boy, don't you see that white man on the can?" And then he'd add . . . "Sho was glad it wasn't a white woman . . . I'da never got nothing to smoke!") A minor (or maybe not so minor) incongruity is that on most of the Folkways (and other companies with old blues singers) liner notes, where the lyrics of the songs heard in a particular album have been transcribed, there are always tremendous discrepancies between what the singer is singing, and what the transcriber has written down. It was really awful on Brownie's notes . . . and he sounds like Milton Cross compared with, say, Blind Lemon or somebody. I suspect the transcribers are Johnny Mathis fans, or maybe have paper ears.

LeRoi Jones

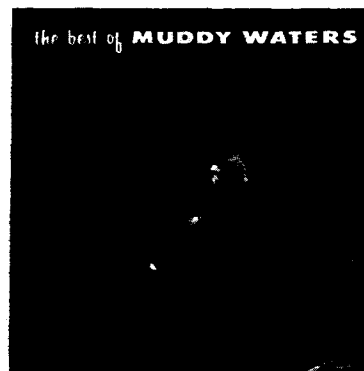
**ELIZABETH COTTEN:** "Negro Folk Songs and Tunes". Folkways FG 3526. Wilson Rag; Freight Train; Goin' Down the Road Feelin' Bad; I Don't Love Nobody; Ain't Got No Honey Baby Now; Honey Babe Your Papa Cares For You; Vastopol; Here Old Rattler Here; Sent For My Fiddle; Geo. Buck; Run-Run; Mama Your Son Done Gone; Sweet Bye and Bye; What a Friend We Have in Jesus; Oh Babe It Ain't No Lie; Spanish Flang Dang; When I Get Home; Graduation March.

There is a tendency in the folklore field to collect and record every scrap of information or "lore" falling from

Then You'll  
Know You've  
Got

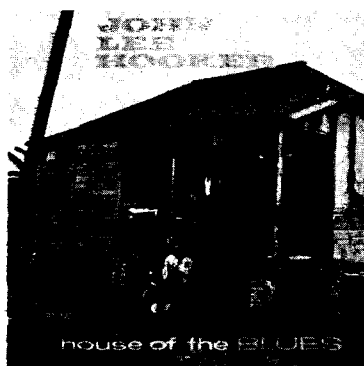
# THE BLUES

Chess LP 1427



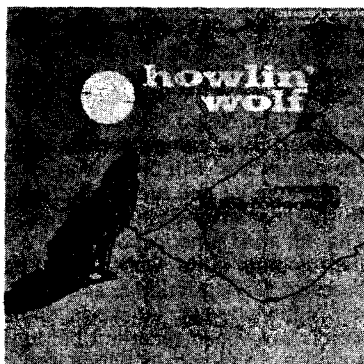
MUDDY WATERS

Chess LP 1438



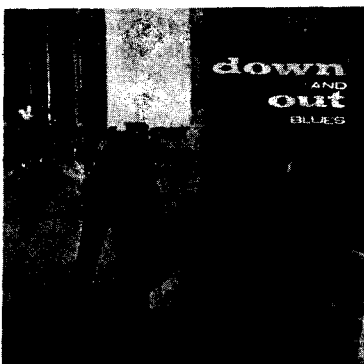
JOHN LEE HOOKER

Chess LP 1434



HOWLIN' WOLF

Checkers LP 1437



SONNY BOY WILLIAMSON

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the mouths of old-timers without weighing its merit. While field recording is of great value to the scholar as a tool for research and as a means of preserving material intact, the on-the-spot session from the rickety porch does not always tie up into a neatly-packaged lp.

In the eagerness to capture an authentic "itch-and-scratch-it folksiness" (as a *Time* movie reviewer phrased it), some collector-recorders appear to lose all sense of proportion and eagerly swallow any hokum served them by the quaint "uncle" or "aunt" who is putting them on.

If the scholar wishes to record these old-timey reminiscences or fabrications for his private purposes, fine. If he is able to extract from the collection even one really worth-while item for use in his academic undertakings, good. The scholar should be able to distinguish what is actually pertinent to folklore and cultural tradition and what is merely the personal idiosyncrasies of an informant. But does the layman possess the knowledge and discriminatory powers to do likewise, if such material is dumped in front of him unsorted on an lp? He might be convinced beforehand that the material must be worthy of conservation and respect since it emanates from "The Folk;" and when he is exposed to the "let's-get-together-folks" atmosphere of some of these recordings, his initial convictions are likely to be reinforced.

These remarks were prompted by the album "**Negro Folk Songs and Tunes.**" Not that the recollected songs played and sung by Elizabeth Cotten here are hokum or superfluous; they form one more small bit of background data on the Negro folk roots of jazz. However, little can be derived from the album that will be of more value to the scholar and historian, than to the layman or casual listener. The album is a hodgepodge of instrumental guitar work, gospel hymns, blues of varying lengths, and miscellaneous secular songs, some of which have been recorded before in fuller, more musically satisfying versions. Mrs. Cotten picks her instrument upside down, as she is left-handed, and her style is identified as "ragtime." Those who are connoisseurs of folk guitar and banjo styles, able to distinguish picking techniques, will be able to appreciate these technicalities on the instrumental tracks; those who are not may find the music a bit repetitious.

According to the notes, Mrs. Cotten learned these songs in her early years, then joined the church shortly after her marriage at fifteen, and for thirty-five years gave up all but religious music. When she began working for the Seeger family she tried to recall the old tunes. Since she was unable to remember all the words,

many of the songs are fragmentary and consequently not too satisfying unless the listener is familiar with complete versions.

A few of Mrs. Cotten's comments about the tunes—where and when they were played and how she learned them—appear in the notes, but in general the notes are of no help in relating the songs to each other, in supplying some thread which would tie the tunes to the folk song tradition, or in pointing out the influence of this music on later types and the direction of its subsequent development. Probably the scholar or folk music student is capable of supplying this information for himself, but for the casual listener, a more informative set of notes would be of aid.

In this lp, emphasis is on material rather than performer and performance. According to folk song enthusiasts, the fact that Mrs. Cotten's vocals are a little shaky and often flat, that some of her singing is so faint behind the guitar that the lyrics would be a total loss were they not printed in the notes, and that her playing is invaded by occasional squeaks, is secondary to the fact that the material itself has not been tampered with and that Mrs. Cotten presents the songs for themselves.

These are not the finished performances of folk songs we have from singers of folk song who give concerts or make records; these are not even performances. With Mrs. Cotten, in contrast to the precious handling of songs by some professional folk singers who are so full of folksy abandon and so determinedly in-concert-but-all-folk, one has the sense of overhearing someone singing to pass the time, taking up another song on tiring of one.

I feel, though, that there are many elderly persons with good memories and extensive repertoires who, if given an opportunity to record, could equal if not surpass Mrs. Cotten, whose voice and material are very ordinary. The fact that this lady happened to work for the Seegers did not exactly harm her discovery or recording "career." If the only requisite necessary to making a folk recording be that the person recall a few old songs, I can think of several geriatric individuals—some in my own family—I could "discover" right now. Though old songs and items transmitted through oral tradition should be preserved, if only for the negative virtue of establishing the low calibrations by which to gauge the popular expressions of a culture, they need not all be thrust before the public haphazardly. Since Mrs. Cotten's songs are useful primarily for those involved in research, this material really belongs in archives, for it does not work into an lp of consequence.

Mimi Clar

#### THE DIXIE HUMMINGBIRDS: "A Christian Testimonial". Peacock PLP 100.

The Final Edition; Oh How I Love Jesus; I Just Want To Tell You; Christian's Automobile; Nobody Knows the Trouble I see; Are You Ready; God Is Now Speaking; We'll Meet Again; Poor Pilgrim of Sorrow; He'll Do the Same For You; Devil Can't Harm a Praying Man; Christian Testimonial.

The Dixie Hummingbirds are one of the leading gospel recording groups in the country today.

A group with a light, easy, floating sound, rather than a blue or robust delivery like the Original Gospel Harmonettes, the Dixie Hummingbirds (James Davis, Howard Carroll, James Walker, Ira Tucker, William Bo-Bo, and Beachey Thompson) build their lead-chorus arrangements over guitar, handclaps and drums, while the bass voice acts like part of the rhythm section by booming out resonant bass lines on the syllable "bmm." (The descending bass lines on **He'll Do the Same For You** and the breaks on **Are You Ready** stand out like Blanton's work behind the Ellington orchestra.) Though the Hummingbirds' style takes shape most readily on ear-catching songs like **Devil Can't Harm a Praying Man** and **Are You Ready**, both of which move at a brisk trot, their performance of slow or spiritual-type numbers like **Poor Pilgrim of Sorrow**, **Nobody Knows the Trouble I See** (standard words but different tune), and particularly the lovely **Christian Testimonial**, is of the highest musical quality and reflects their personal inspiration and religious conviction.

The track called **Christian's Automobile** is one of those metaphorical excursions that relates religious experiences to everyday events. The partial transcription of the text which follows, reveals an obvious but effective use of imagery to get across spiritual ideals in terms immediate enough to be easily comprehended and applied:

Every child of God running  
for Jesus

Just like an automobile . . .  
Prayer is your driver, faith is your  
steerin' wheel.

If you get on the road to glory,  
Satan is gonna try to flag you down  
But keep on driving . . .

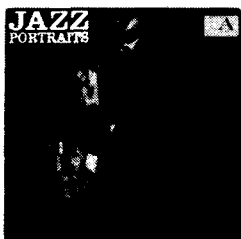
You got to check on your tires;  
you got a rough road ahead  
And when you're weary from  
the journey

God will put you to bed.

You got to check on your brakes,  
and stop your wicked ways . . .

You gotta check on your lights;  
and see your own faults

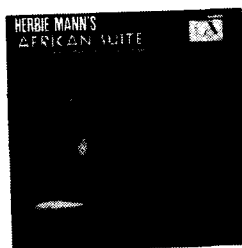
Stop while you can see them  
children,  
Or your soul will be lost.



**JAZZ PORTRAITS**—Charles Mingus with John Handy, Booker Ervin, Richard Wyands, Dannie Richmond  
UAL 4036 • Stereo UAS 5036



**BRASS SHOUT** arranged by Benny Golson. Art Farmer with Lee Morgan, Ernie Royal, Jimmy Cleveland, Curtis Fuller, Julius Watkins, Don Butterfield, Percy Heath, Elvin Jones, Philly Joe Jones, Bobby Timmons, and others  
UAL 4047 • Stereo UAS 5047



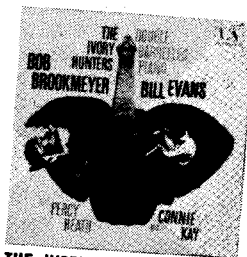
**HERBIE MANN'S AFRICAN SUITE**—Johnny Rae's Afro Jazz Septet  
UAL 4042 • Stereo UAS 5042



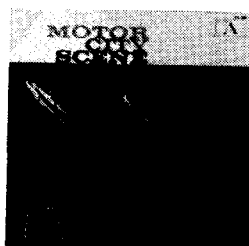
**JAZZ ALIVE! A NIGHT AT THE HALF NOTE**—Zoot Sims, Al Cohn, Phil Woods  
UAL 4040 • Stereo UAS 5040



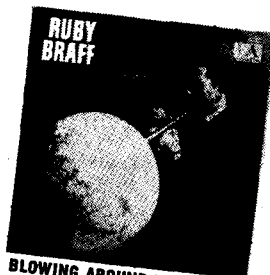
**LOVE FOR SALE**—Cecil Taylor Trio and Quintet  
UAL 4046 • Stereo UAS 5046



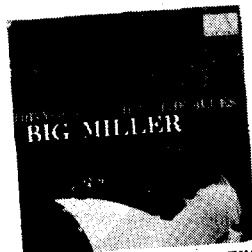
**THE IVORY HUNTERS DOUBLE BARRELLED PIANO**—Bob Brookmeyer & Bill Evans with Percy Heath and Connie Kay  
UAL 3044 • Stereo UAS 6044



**MOTOR CITY SCENE**—Thad Jones, Billy Mitchell, Tommy Flanagan, Paul Chambers, Elvin Jones and Al Grey  
UAL 4025 • Stereo UAS 5025



**BLOWING AROUND THE WORLD** Ruby Braff with Bob Brookmeyer and Barry Galbraith  
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**DID YOU EVER HEAR THE BLUES?**—Big Miller his choice of 11 deep blues by Langston Hughes  
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 the Man,  
 You need Him every hour.  
 Christians, oh, press on  
 your starters  
 And start your automobile.  
 Put it in first gear and go on  
 up the hill.  
 Drive on, children, if I never  
 see you no more  
 I'll meet you when I pull in  
 on the other shore.  
 And I'm no worried—I've got  
 my parking space . . .

Mimi Clar

## TAMBOURINES TO GLORY.

Folkways FG 3538.

I don't know much about gospel music, but I know what I like. On the one hand I like the informal congregational singing, usually with plenty of handclapping and sometimes with instrumental accompaniment, that I think of as sanctified singing—whether it really is or not I don't know. On the other hand I like the solo singing by the kind of singers I used to think of as 'trained'. (I also happen to like Rev. Gary Davis and Blind Willie Johnson, especially for their stunning guitar playing, but that would make three hands and a bad figure of speech.)

Harry Smith included two terrific examples of the kind of ensemble singing I mean in his "Anthology of American Folk Music" for Folkways (a marvelous collection anyhow): Rev. F. W. McGee's *Fifty Miles of Elbow Room* with piano, guitar and a fine hot trumpet; and Rev. D. C. Rice's *I'm in the Battlefield for my Lord*, with a full instrumental group including a trumpet who certainly sounds like Bunk Johnson, although I understand he probably isn't. There is about some of these groups an unforced exuberance—I am tempted to say honest exuberance—found in the best New Orleans jazz. I don't know how far back the style goes, but it was already fully developed by the time the records I mentioned were made (1929-31); in any event most of the features associated with modern gospel music were there, as well as an integrated instrumental style one seldom hears anymore.

Of the good soloists I have heard, most seem to be women. The best of them all, as far as I am concerned, is Georgia Peach, who is not only a great gospel singer, but a great artist. I know her only through her records, particularly the Classic Editions lp (I've never interviewed her); on them she exhibits a voice of magnificent tonal quality with which she does wondrous things.

"*Tambourines to Glory*" has both of the kinds of gospel music I've been talking

about, but nothing of the same distinction. Considering Langston Hughes accomplishments as a poet the verses, all by him, are rather ordinary. "As I go, as I go / Oh, Jesus, walk by my side / As I go. / As I go, as I go / Be my guide as I go / Through this world" does not seem to me to be particularly remarkable poetry. There is however some refreshing vernacular: "Devil, devil let yourself get lost! / Yesterday, I played your game, / But today I'll be the boss. / I gave up balling / And I gave up sin, / Gave up whiskey / And I gave up gin. / My feet are anchored on the gospel shore / And I ain't gonna play no more" which must be something of a new departure in religious verse. Nor could I tell Jobe Huntley's tunes from a hundred others I've heard. Huntley is also the soloist on *When I Touch His Garment, Back to the Fold*, and *Tambourines to Glory*, although I suppose it would be more correct to say he is the leader on the last piece. At the beginning of *Back to the Fold* his voice is downright bad; at its best, it just isn't very good. The timbre isn't there to begin with, and he doesn't seem to be able to do anything with his voice to make up for the lack.

As a soloist, Rev. Ernest Cook (*Home to God, Thank God I've Got the Bible*) seems much better to me, which is not to say he is a great singer. But at least he has some kind of voice, and I rather enjoyed *Thank God I've Got the Bible*. Of course the occasional interjected 'yeahs' in the background help, and so does the humming at the beginning.

On the whole, the numbers with the chorus—I must confess a certain amount of confusion as to who they are, but I would guess the Porter Singers—seem to be the better ones. The choral singing has none of the looseness of the sanctified congregation, their shifting accents, or their unpredictable entrances and exits. As a matter of fact the chorus is pretty well disciplined, with a bright sound and an unstrained vigor. There are a few 'hallelujahs', 'oh yeahs', and 'sing it's!' scattered about, but for the most part the chorus comes in cleanly, just where it is supposed to. Whoever did the arrangements showed some imagination in the use of the chorus, which is sometimes in unison with the lead singer, sometimes antiphonal (this is Afro-American music, you know), and on *As I Go* snaps out 'walk b'side me' in a march rhythm under Ernest Cook's 'As I go, as I go.' A familiar effect I suppose, but a good one. *I'm Gonna Testify* is an exciting ensemble number with almost the full machinery: a tambourine (teenage Benjamin Snowden), after-beat hand clapping, the high, sustained note from the chorus. As the piece develops the

rhythm is broken down into smaller units, increasing the tension toward a climax, something few of the other pieces achieve. *Let the Church Say Amen* does have the full machinery—Carl McWilliams' sax in addition to the tambourine, organist Hampton Carlton, pianist Hugh E. Porter, and guitarist Yvonne Cumberbatch—but it is also much less good. There is a fair female soloist in the 'Licker drinking brother' verse, and another pretty good one in the last verse ('If some weary warrior'), but the woman who solos (the anonymous notes also fail to identify many of the people on the record) on 'Listen, wayward sister' is perfectly dreadful. I did like *Devil, Take Yourself Away* sung from the piano—which sounds, by the way, remarkably like Fats Waller—by Hugh Porter, accompanied by some fine massed antiphonal singing.

The notes make the interesting remark that 'church music is usually fifty years behind worldly music.' I don't know that this has always been true—it seems to me there was a time in music history when quite the reverse was true—and I don't know about the fifty years. I'd say thirty years is closer, for one striking thing about the music on this lp is the way it snacks of the 'twenties. From the piano introduction, which could serve any Follies chorus line, the title number *Tambourines to Glory* sums it up: the 'hot' saxophone, the breaks, the stride piano, the Hall-Johnson type choir bring us right back to the Jazz Age.

Of course the faint odor of vaudeville I seem to detect may not be in the music at all. There are, indeed, plenty of joyful noises on the lp; what I miss is anything deeper. It is probably wrong to ask of a music whose aim is to celebrate something we don't even believe in that it move us. Yet Georgia Peach does just this; it could be said that it is precisely the ability to transcend the narrow base from which she operates that makes her singing Art. When gospel music doesn't convey this great conviction—and '*Tambourines to Glory*' certainly doesn't—we are left with mere singing, which may be more or less good as singing, nothing more. Right at the beginning of the novel *Tambourines to Glory*, Essie is talking to Laura: "In the evening, Mama would go to service by herself and turn out the light and leave me in bed until I got teen-age. Then I went to church at night too. I loved those songs, *Precious Lord, Take my Hand*. Oh, but that's pretty! Let's go to church Easter, Laura."

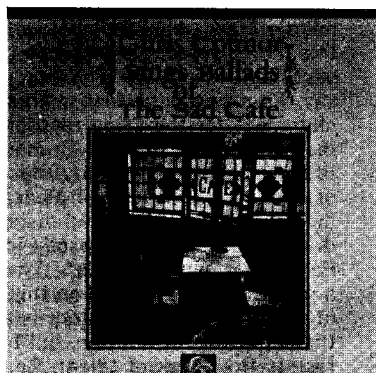
"Which one, Sanctified or Baptist?" "Where the singing is best," said Essie.

"Sanctified," said Laura.

This lp was recorded at the New Canaan Baptist Church.

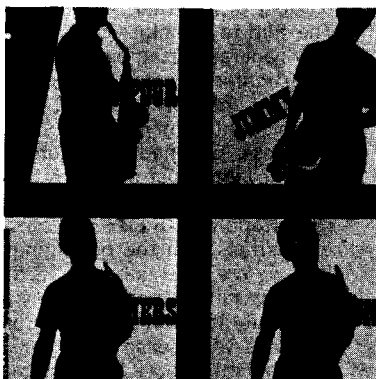
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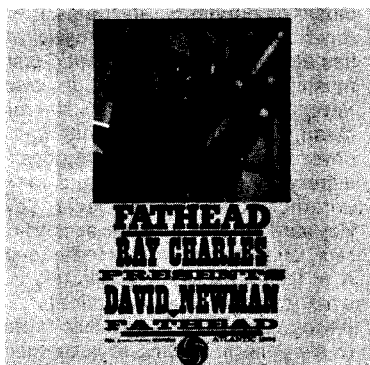
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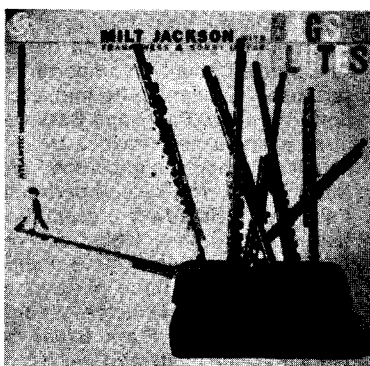


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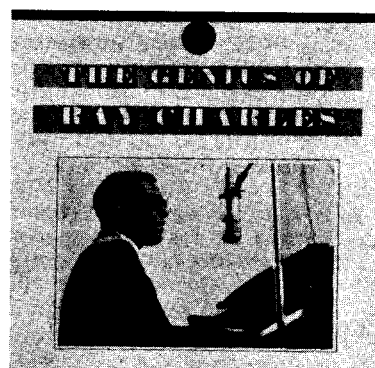
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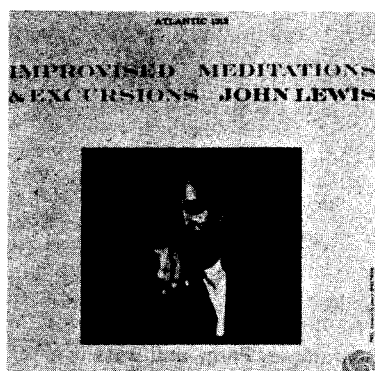
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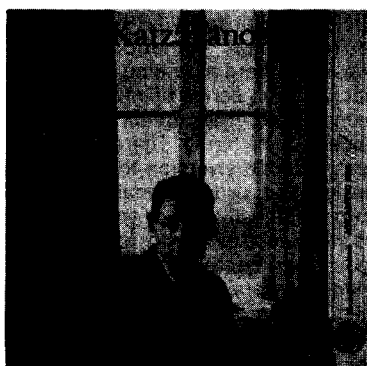
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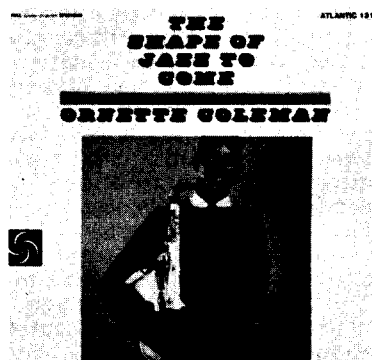
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# MOVIE REVIEW

As a movie, *Porgy and Bess* is a complete failure. Otto Preminger and Sam Goldwyn with their usual passionate intensity have managed to suck out what few vital juices there are to the original "operatic" version. They present it here as a kind of flat, uncinematic series of rather dull monologues, interrupted, not frequently enough, by singing. There was no reason for this version to be filmed on location, or the characters to dress in period costumes, or the usual effects of Hollywood films; instead all the movie's characters should have been made to stand in front of microphones, like a radio program, reading their lines to cue in the singers. There seemed to be no real attempt at film making, certainly no real attempt at making a film out of *Porgy and Bess*. It seemed the usual badly acted but beautifully sung opera with not nearly as much help from the singing as one usually gets in a *Giovanni*. It seemed also—aside from the depressing fact that operas usually don't have much development of plot, or characters, and are essentially just fine singers clumping awkwardly through stagey lines—that there had been no attempt to broaden the opera-ish script into a credible screenplay. Most of the time, I felt the story was being narrated, rather than acted: nothing happened, really, but the singers kept insisting it had. It reminded me of the time my father took me to see a broadcast of

"*The Shadow*," one of my favorite radio programs. When we got there and I discovered that all this marvelous action was just a bunch of sound effects, and actors standing in front of microphones with their hats on, reading from sheets of paper, I was thoroughly disenchanted. But I must admit there wasn't nearly as much disenchantment at the unmasking of *Porgy and Bess* as there was with "*The Shadow*." Perhaps because, to be quite honest, I have never been sold on *Porgy and Bess*; in fact, for most of the time I've known about the play, I've more or less been persuaded it was really an awful thing, with hardly any merit. I always thought the music represented very good American popular music (and as such, I suppose could be classified as "folk music", but the folk in this case being so shallowly sophisticated as to have almost become a form of musical expression completely anti-musical as well as anti-emotional). But this is something somebody else ought to talk about at length in an essay prying into the significance (culturally) of the success and general acceptance, by a whole people, of a music as eminently sterile as the American Popular Song. Anyway, it has always troubled me that Gershwin's music, while admirable in its own way, never had much to do with Negroes. I mean, *I Got Plenty of Nuthin'* has never made me think of Negroes, especially just Broadway and for some unfathomable reason, Oscar Levant. Heyward's novel is mere second-rate fare, and I'm not interested enough in it to try to discuss it separately from what it got to be as a musical. I suppose another important factor in my general feeling of estrangement from *Porgy and Bess* is the caliber of performance I've been exposed to. I've seen it three times, and each time I've come away feeling not so much out of sympathy with the play as confused about its importance, seriousness, meaning (to me), etc. The first time I saw *Porgy and Bess* was in an amateur performance by a hopelessly inept neighborhood group in Newark, N. J. The second performance I saw was a Broadway presentation featuring Lawrence Tibbet as Porgy. The film is the third. I have disliked, unreservedly, all three performances. The Tibbet debacle actually convinced me for a time that *P and B* was mere parochial head-patting fare. (I realize now that I was just confusing aesthetics with sociology.) I also realize now that *P and B* is not positive enough to be even a "shuffle" drama. This is one reason a crew like Goldwyn and Preminger couldn't possibly have made a good film out of the opera. They are completely without insight, and the only thing that could make a human and possibly moving production out of *Porgy* would be a great deal of insight and

intellectual commitment. I am quite sure Preminger and Goldwyn are much better off without either. I am saying that the vision Heyward and Gershwin present (from the first, their artifact) for use as an American drama with music is useless, and that to make an honest beautiful statement out of their raw material would take genius, perhaps of a kind not to be found in America. To make good entertainment (which I believe might be done, with a good rewriting) is a simpler task, and I think it is not asking too much to hope that one day it might be accomplished—or at least that I might see such an entertainment.

Another point I have considered (and perhaps this is most important to me) is that *P and B* represent almost the perfect statement of the American middle class about Negroes, and that this filmed version is probably that statement in classic rendition. I would say the music is perfect in this statement for the same reasons *Time* magazine can that Dave Brubeck is the most important jazz musician of our time—that kind of pleasant, but in reality, hideous and dishonest dilution. Gershwin (*Rhapsody in Blue*, Paul Whiteman as witnesses) made a music that capitalized on this kind of dilution. Heyward's story is almost the same kind of dilution, but his results from lack of talent. Gershwin, at least, did bring an original energy into what he diluted. He is a "pure product of America," however tepid. The film is the classic statement of this general flattening and softening of a particular element in America life. The presentation is geared perfectly to the content. Everything is smooth, hitchless, polished and thoroughly unbelievable. Just as we certainly don't have to worry about somebody having reed trouble in Roger Williams' orchestras, from the beginning of the film we are sure nobody's in danger of being put in the way of any artistic catharsis. It's just as smooth and bland as you please. Sidney Poitier says it took him a long time to decide whether he wanted to do *P and B* or not, because he wanted to make sure he wouldn't be offending anyone (Negroes, I suppose). Well, what James Agee said about the cries that sprang up when it was announced that Hollywood had bitten off more than it could chew, politically, when it filmed *For Whom The Bell Tolls* applies here: the only persons that would be offended by this would be people interested in seeing a good film. (Although I suppose someone could take exception to all those women walking around with rags on their heads, everybody knows Ralph Bunch and Jackie Robinson never walk around with rags on their heads.) But it makes me despair of ever really seeing Negroes in films where they are not chained to somebody's idea



(no matter how heroic or noble) of how they ought to be. The **Defiant Ones** and **Edge of the City** almost make the grade, but not quite. (I think one reason these two films don't make it is the unevenness of Poitier's performances. As good as he is, Poitier is not a "professional", in the same sense that, say, Franchot Tone is. Poitier has passions he can control or flaunt with, sometimes, amazing effect, but he has not, and may not ever have, the effortless emotional precision of a Tone. Poitier is an actor who needs direction, and a great deal of it, to give an even, well-thought-out performance. In **The Defiant Ones**, I suspect there was a strong pair of directorial hands manipulating Poitier's admittedly marvelous energies. Once this is understood about Poitier, it is not difficult to see why he was awkward and incredible, except in one or two scenes, throughout **Porgy and Bess**. Preminger-Goldwyn is, for a talent like Poitier's, decidedly lethal.

Anyway, what I mean is that this **P and B** is the perfect movie for both Negro and white middle class. It offends no one except those few I mentioned earlier, and it is supposed to be marvelous entertainment. It fits right into the current trend in Hollywood for handling Negroes (and in Hollywood there has got to be a trend or standard fashionable method for handling them, or they don't get handled). In the

old days it was easier: the patronizing and the paternal were o.k. and funny. But in these enlightened times, one has to be a little more subtle. The trend now is to make any stories or parts for Negroes completely boring, and/or unbelievable. (See James Baldwin's essay on **Carmen Jones** in his **Notes of a Native Son** for the low-down on all that).

What Harry Belafonte ought to realize before he makes any more films (that is, if he is interested seriously "in presenting the Negro as he really is") is that just to put a man in a business suit and have him speak good English is not enough to have him realistic. A Negro on the screen, just because he is not made into a butler or a domestic, is not automatically more desirable. There are other things men and women do besides not being butlers and maids. (I bring up Belafonte here because he has launched a project for getting more Negroes into films.) And I think there have been no convincing portraits of the Negro from Hollywood (with the possible exception of a few parts of **The Defiant Ones**, **Edge of the City**, and **Intruder in the Dust**). Further, there are only a frighteningly few Negro actors who have the talent to give a really convincing performance. Poitier, Juano Hernandez in the movies, Claudia McNeil, Earl Hyman, Earl Scott and perhaps Melvin Stewart, in the

theatre.

Basically, the film is bad because the original is already too weak to stand further dilution, but we are presented with a double dilution: first the middle-class vision of the Negro (or at least the thirties middle class) and with Preminger-Goldwyn, an artistic dilution. It is a hard burden to saddle on some respectable popular tunes. But the singing in the film is good: the voices of William Warfield and Adele Addison in the title roles and Brock Peters as Crown using his own voice. In fact, the singing is so good compared with the acting (Poitier does nothing; Dorothy Dandridge has always been a cipher as far as I'm concerned; Pearl Bailey is great as Pearl Bailey—but then there's that saying about pearls before swine, or something). I had wondered why (to really get the perfect class statement) Goldwyn hadn't decided to use the Miles Davis-Gil Evans "**Porgy and Bess**." The kind of sophisticated mood music Miles and Evans made the tunes into would have fit perfectly. They (the movie and the Davis album) gave me the same feeling: I kept thinking that when Porgy left Catfish Row for New York, he was headed straight for the local NAACP office, and that, he Sportin' Life and Bess would turn up sooner or later in the "**Speaking of People**" column of **Ebony** magazine.

LeRoi Jones



**Harry Belafonte**

# BOOK REVIEWS

**WHITNEY BALLIETT: *The Sound of Surprise*, 46 pieces on jazz. Dutton & Co. Inc., 1959.**

This book collects the jazz pieces Whitney Balliett contributed to *The New Yorker* in 1957, 1958, part of 1959, and revisions of articles for the *Saturday Review* and *The Reporter*. It is doubtful if Mr. Balliett has done himself a very good service in preserving all these pieces between hard covers. Many of them are concert and record reviews—workaday material of the kind every jazz writer has to produce but, with occasional exceptions, of ephemeral interest. Mr. Balliett may have felt that in bringing them together he was assembling a picture of the passing scene as it appeared to one observer at the time but most of them are too brief and written too close to the events to provide many significant insights.

When writing for magazines like *The Jazz Review* or *Jazz Monthly* one is certain the great majority of readers are interested in jazz and want to know more about it. But with *The New Yorker* one's audience is not primarily interested in jazz, perhaps not interested at all, and to retain attention it is often necessary to entertain rather than to determine what is happening in the music. To say this is not to condemn Mr. Balliett, merely to recognise the limitations within which he works. Under the circumstances it is almost inevitable he should use many phrases that, reminiscent of the emotional impressionism of early jazz writing, have greater picturesqueness than meaning. Does "cowlike" really tell us anything about the trumpet sounds of Harold Baker or Joe Smith? Or "goatlike" about Sonny Rollins? What does "florid" mean

when applied to a musician's attack? How do "crablike" runs differ from "grapeshot" ones? It is difficult to believe the peanut-butter sandwiches on page 79 tell us much about Art Farmer, or to understand how Hawkins was once a "cool museum" of tenor playing. Does "port and velvet" say anything about the marvellous accomplishment of Gil Evans's orchestral technique? In what sense are Monk's compositions "somewhat calculated"? How can a trombonist's tone be "tufted"? And in the cause of picturesqueness Mr. Balliett has devised some rather curious verbs: "to blat", "to thunk", "to whump." However, this style of writing does occasionally achieve surprising accuracy. The description of Brubeck's playing as "melodramatic" is as felicitous as that of Kenton's "alarming, froglike volume" is irresistible. "A clandestine series of chords that only implied the melody" is good too. Now and again Mr. Balliett sums up a situation with admirable conciseness, as when he says "the final collapse of the big-band era in the late 'forties left a permanent hole in jazz". Nonetheless many statements in this book are extremely debatable. It was not just "a few years ago" that Monk, Lewis, George Russell and Gil Evans "began using the greater technical facilities first opened up by bebop". They were all active in that direction in the 'forties—except Evans who never had anything to do with bop. Throughout the development of jazz the 'schism' between improvisation and composition has never been so great as Mr. Balliett implies in his introduction. In the best jazz they go inextricably together. To those familiar with his best work with Ellington, Rex Stewart is in no sense

a "diminishment" of Cootie Williams but a strong, many-sided solo personality on his own. The alleged influence of gospel music on Thelonious Monk is dubious, and it is untrue that Riverside's *Monk's Music* 1p revealed a "heretofore largely undemonstrated talent as an arranger". That talent was made obvious years ago by recordings like *Criss Cross* and *Carolina Moon*. (However Mr. Balliett does appreciate the value of Monk's consistency.) There are a few historical slips such as placing Stitt with the hard boppers and the still underrated Roy Haynes with younger drummers like Elvin Jones and Louis Hayes. And misconceptions too. Polytonality and atonality are not in essence "classical devices" as Mr. Balliett appears to think. They have not yet been used extensively in jazz but that does not make them the exclusive property of straight musicians. A reference to "classical techniques pasted onto standard jazz contents" is particularly irritating. How on earth does one paste together techniques that are concerned with the organization of musical material—structures in pitch and time? This is typical of what happens when non-musicians write on music.

But despite it all Mr. Balliett writes with considerable understanding of such diverse musicians as Pee Wee Russell, Garner and Mingus. He has a good introductory piece on the blues and a completely accurate assessment of Kenton—placing him in relation to the lesser pre-war white swing bands and not with the modern movement at all—that is brief yet leaves nothing more to be said. He makes some original miscellaneous points such as the one that "although jazz began as a vocal music it has produced only a handful of full-fledged jazz singers". Particularly excellent is a piece on Sidney Catlett that ought to find its way into a better anthology than this. Indeed he writes with considerable analytical skill on drummers, Blakey and Philly Joe Jones among them, but has limited sympathy with the more modern ones. I believe he is the first to point out the hints of later innovations that can be detected in Kenny Clarke's drumming on Bechet's 1940 *One O'clock Jump* session. His views on Roach are quite unacceptable.

At the end of the book it remains difficult to say just where Mr. Balliett stands. Although he is sympathetic to some of them, he is quite censorious of the moderns and seems most strongly attached to the pre-war swing men. He certainly writes of some of the latter—Catlett and Ben Webster, for example—with notable insight. Yet he is capable of an unpleasantly slick near-debunking of Louis Armstrong. It would be interesting to know from Mr. Balliett in which records does Louis display "a tendency to fluff one out of every five notes". One also wonders how well acquainted with Armstrong's records he is when, despite pieces like

Wild man blues, Mr. Balliett tells us he has never been an "energetic improviser". And is the accompaniment provided by Hines, Singleton et al on records like *Basin Street blues* really a "tea-dance background"? At times Mr. Balliett's values seem very uncertain.

Max Harrison

**JAZZ** by Leonard Feather.  
Petersen Publishing Co., Los Angeles, Calif.

This is an accurate history of the development of jazz from the thirties until the present. Published in magazine form with many excellent photographs and few advertisements, it is well worth the 50¢ tab.

The strongest feature of the writing is the historical detail. Leonard gives a good resume of the state of affairs that affected the economy of the jazz musician at the beginning of the war, catalogues the arrival of new musicians, groups, composers and music, and follows the principal developments of style. There are many accounts of the specific circumstances leading to the formation of various groups that produced important music, such as the Eckstine band and the Miles Davis Capitol recording group.

Leonard's conception of cause and effect in the music world is okay until he begins to deal with the creative process itself. His idea that new forms were invented because jazz had stagnated is a common mistake: whenever a few years pass without the appearance of a new hero, up goes the cry that jazz is stagnating. Even when there is no great leader around, musicians who are able to work creatively find some way to sustain their interest in music. The act of creating is always the most satisfying part of it, and whatever form holds the musician's interest at the moment is valid. When a musician of exceptional originality invents some especially beautiful music, other musicians are excited by the possibilities presented and their imaginations are in turn stimulated. The emergence of the exceptional artist is a rare and wonderful phenomenon, but it is a mistake to think that the work done by less spectacular musicians leads to stagnation and decay.

When the market for jazz is good it becomes easier for both the creative and the mechanical worker to sustain themselves; when business is bad only the creative worker has any reason for continuing to play. All the economic and social factors that Leonard mentions certainly have their effect on him, but they do not determine what sounds good to him.

Several fragmentary interviews with jazz players are sprinkled through the

THE ART OF

JAZZ

## THE ART OF JAZZ

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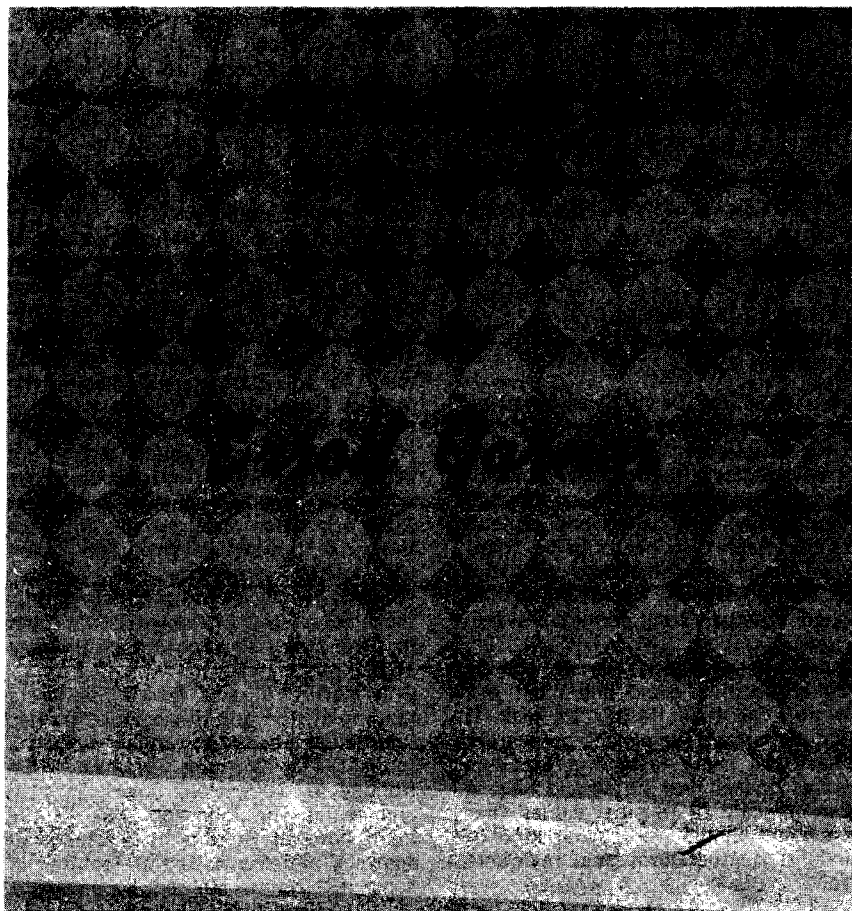
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text as illustrations of various points of view. In the Miles Davis interview I notice that where Leonard asks a general question, "How did the evolution into the cool era begin?", Miles gives a specific personal answer, "I always wanted to play with a light sound, because I could think better when I played that way", when Leonard asks a loaded question, "Would you say he [Tristano] was one of the few white musicians who had harmonic originality?", Miles avoids the trap ("Yes, he did . . ." not, yes, he was.) Leonard is a better interviewer when he asks simple questions that can be answered simply. When he begins probing for musical values the lack of clarity in his questioning indicates that he isn't sure what it is he's trying to find out. Fortunately even poor questions often give the people he is interviewing the chance to mention something of interest, and the dialogues in this book between Leonard and Mulligan, Miles, Brubeck and Previn are worth reading.

Albert Isaacs, the art director of this volume, is to be congratulated on the general good quality of the photographs. There are over a hundred in all, including many historically interesting band photos, some really excellent portraits of individual soloists and some charming informal shots. In a double page spread with Miles, Allen Eager and Kai Winding, a youthful Charlie Parker is caught with an expression in his eyes that is as direct and moving as the sound of his saxophone, a beautiful picture. The photo credits are lumped together in the front of the book, but I have a hunch this one is from the good work done by Herman Leonard in the late forties.

Bill Crow

#### DOWN BEAT JAZZ RECORD REVIEWS, Vol. 3. Maher Publications 1958.

During 1958 the *Down Beat* reviewing team plowed its way through 442 new records in addition to reissue material. The new records in themselves constitute more than twelve days' continuous listening time, and when one remembers that each disc needs to be heard several times and sometimes compared with earlier issues, the task accomplished assumes truly formidable proportions.

But before suggesting anyone spends a dollar on this book, one must ask how well the team fulfills its task. It would be absurd to expect a reviewer to have the same taste and predilections as oneself but he should have a coherent scale of musical values that are evident in his work. What kind of standards do the *Down Beat* reviewers have?

First of all, they are insufficiently critical. The average rating all these discs received was 3.3 stars—and 3 stars is supposed to indicate a record as being good. I don't believe the bulk of that 442 records, were better than good. They may have been with regard to competence of performance but not in musical value, not in making an original contribution to jazz. When one looks at the star ratings, it at once becomes hard to tell what standards are in operation. Thus Harry Belafonte's dreadful "blues singing" is awarded 3½ stars—as many as Rushing and Broonzy. But then *Down Beat* isn't very strong on blues anyway. In the whole year only five important blues issues (two Broonzy, one Rushing, one Brownie McGhee and one Sonny Terry/McGhee) were covered. European visitors like Albert McCarthy and Yannick Bruynoghe have written of the fine blues singers who can be heard in Chicago today, and companies like Chess Records are still recording many contemporary singers, yet relying on *Down Beat* one might conclude this vital aspect of jazz had ceased to exist. Instead a record by the effete Herb Ellis is given 5 stars and recommended as "the whole story" of the blues. Many mediocre items receive surprisingly high ratings, for example undistinguished collections by Manny Albam and Buddy de Franco have 5 stars apiece. Against this the unique Henderson band reunion on Jazztone gets 4 stars and Bud Powell's "Blues in the Closet" set a mere 2. It seems reasonable to conclude that slick competence is the quality most likely to win approval, but then the clumsy, insensitive "New Orleans jazz" of Ken Colyer and Turk Murphy is awarded 3 and 4 stars respectively. Do the reviewers concerned know any of the American Music lps? It seems unlikely.

The impression of confused values is heightened by some of the extraordinary opinions expressed in these pages. On page 54, without any apparent satirical intent, Leonard Feather states that de Franco has done as much for the clarinet as Parker for the alto! A Donald Byrd review speaks of the "Gillespie-Navarro-Davis tradition." His early death may explain, though not excuse, ignorance of Navarro's work, but a reviewer really ought to know that Dizzy and Miles stand for very different things in trumpet playing. The Seven Up bottle gimmickry of Lateef's "Sounds of Yusef" gets 3 stars, and those interested in George Lewis' debt to Artie Shaw (!) should consult page 151.

Only Martin Williams' reviews are worth reading all the way through and he has interesting ideas on Julian Adderley (pp. 10-11), Coltrane (p. 93), Billie Holiday (p. 100), Hank Jones (p. 113) and Willie The Lion (p. 188). In the main, however, there is little attempt at analysis, and the essential features of some records are ignored. For example,

the chief point about the Monk/Mulligan Riverside was that, through extreme contrast, it illustrated the very different approaches of these two important musicians. This is not mentioned. Langston Hughes's poetry readings to music by Henry Allen, Dickenson et al receive 4 stars, but the reviewer seems unaware there is no essential fusion between words and music here. The extreme incongruity of teaming Pee Wee Russell with Jimmy Giuffre on "The Sound of Jazz" lp goes unremarked, as does the artificiality of Johnny Richards' use of African rhythms in "The Rites of Diabolo."

The description of Jackie McLean and John Jenkins as "two latter-day birds-in-the-hand" and a reference to Condon's "China Shop Bulls" suggest Bill Russo was justified in complaining jazz writers cannot always resist a cute phrase. On page 40 Ornette Coleman's lines are called "attractively linear." One might as well talk of dry dust or wet water.

A selection of the usual clichés is here too. That Coleman review contains the usual one about Monk's limitations: ". . . the frustration of not being capable of attaining the heights yearned for so desperately" and so on. It is surely significant that none of those who speak of Monk in this way has never pointed to a specific passage in one of his records and told us what notes Monk would have liked to play had he been able. One of the Powell reviews mentions the legendary maturity of Bud's work with Cootie Williams in 1944. Since Leonard Feather wrote in *Inside Be-Bop* ten years ago that Cootie's Hit sessions featured the pianist "playing almost the same bop style he features today," nobody seems to have bothered to listen to the "Echoes of Harlem" album. The fact is that Powell plays a surprisingly advanced bop solo in *Floogie Boo*, but the rest of his work gives scant indication of his later development except in his touch.

If going through this compilation does not often enlighten one about the records, it does inspire a number of random thoughts . . . on American writers' gullibility in accepting the ridiculous "folk" pretenses of the Giuffre group . . . on past history like Barney Bigard's assertion that he wrote *Mood Indigo* and sold it outright for twenty-five dollars . . . and on the decline of jazz. Too many lps are based on show scores, and jazz did not need that kind of prop at one time. There are too many attempts to resurrect past achievements: "Ronnie Gilbert Sings Bessie Smith," "Billy May Plays Lunceford," "Dinah Washington Sings Bessie Smith," "Buddy de Franco Plays Goodman," "La Vern Baker Sings Bessie Smith," "De Franco Plays Artie Shaw." Whatever his limitations, Artie Shaw, in his own day, was too concerned in being himself to want to re-create anyone else.

Max Harrison



## JAZZ IN PRINT

by NAT HENTOFF

Thirty years ago, Roger Pryor Dodge's first article, Negro Jazz, appeared in the London Dancing Times. "Everything I had read," Dodge recalls, "was on the Gershwin-Whiteman bandwagon. Even though better articles of that time have since come to light such as Ernest Ansermet's and Abbe Niles' foreword to Handy's Blues, together with his article in the 1929 edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, I believe mine was the first which did not accept Whiteman, Gershwin and Grofe or any of the other writers composing in extended forms. Both Don Knowlton and Niles looked to the Gershwin-Grofe team to take jazz out of its 'monotonous foxtrot dance-time...' I actually wrote my article in 1925, soon after the famous Whiteman concert, but found no publisher interested. My contention all along has been that jazz can crystallize into composition through notation but that those who did it were on the wrong track from the Gershwin-Grofe efforts in Rhapsody in Blue up to the work of Bill Russo."

A press release from Phil Shea, Boston Jazz Festival: "Throughout the history of jazz there have been two basic orientations to this music, the hard and the cool. The hard school is characterized by a more vigorous, percussive animated style of playing. The cool school is more subtle, relaxed and muted. Among saxophone players to be heard at the festival, for example, Coleman Hawkins can be described as definitely of the hard school. Bud Freeman is cool. Trumpet players like Dizzy Gillespie, Roy Eldridge and Buck Clayton all are hard school players. One top performer at the festival is a hybrid, a pianist who can be described as belonging to neither school. That, of course, is Dave Brubeck..." Lukesoft? Time, the weekly editorial page, reviewed the fourth annual Randall's Island (New York) Jazz Festival from the inside report: "Most of the groups that followed showed their adherence to Brubeck style. Among the best: Miles Davis' Sextet...Ramsey Lewis Trio...Modern Jazz

Quartet."

Was Brubeck adherent Art Blakey also on the program?

Time was characteristically responsible for a malicious report on the death of Boris Vian. The attack was actually made on the film, "J'irai cracher sur vos tombes," based on his book that, while largely a parody, was hardly sympathetic to certain American mores.

After quoting the approving French critics and the violently disapproving Paris "Herald Tribune" man ("absurd and scandalously inaccurate... a silly, sour travesty of American life"), parochial Time ended: "Where Author Vian's views might lie between these two extremes, no one will know. He attended a preview of 'The Spitter,' took one look at his fantastic Trenton, and slumped in his seat. At 39, Boris Vian was dead of a heart attack."

The obvious implication is that Vian was fatally shocked at his own unfairness to America, and succumbed to a just American God's anger. Vian had had a serious heart ailment for some time before his death, and six months before he died, was told his time was short.

Duke Ellington to AP columnist Bob Thomas: "If I didn't keep working all the time, I'd miss out on some greatest experiences. Like having Iowa farmers drive 200 miles to hear you in January. Or going back to England and having people in every town show you programs from 1933, when you last played there. That sort of thing you can't buy. It's what keeps you working and keeps you young."



✓ The July Jazz-Statistics (American representative Ernie Edwards, Jr., 718 Keenan Avenue, Los Angeles 22, California) has discographies of Jesse Powell and some Hampton big bands.

Prez by Leonard Feather in the September Playboy indicates Feather did his own research, and the article is worth looking up for the new material Feather has found and other sections of Lester's biography that he's clarified.

Head-by-line of the year. From The Boston Herald:

"55,000 at Newport Festival Found it One of Greatest." By-line -- "By George T. Wein (Wein is vice-president and director of the Newport Jazz Festival.)" Who needs a press agent when you can be a reporter? Skip Fero, 426 Briarcliffe Avenue, Utica, New York, is writing a biography of Theodore "Fats" Navarro. He would appreciate any information.

Jazz, a small Marseille jazz magazine, has a piece on Ray Bryant. Down Beat hasn't yet, nor, alas, have we.

Louella Parsons, our favorite source on music in Los Angeles, writes: "Jazz music which originated in Africa will be used for sound in 'Tarzan and the Ape,' MGM's new series, according to producer Al Zimbalist. 'This is the idea of Shorty Rogers,' Al told me, 'and Shorty who is an expert, is using bongo drums, trumpets and other African musical instruments in place of normal sound. We have a large orchestra and we believe we have a novelty.'"

What does a trumpet look like? Made out of tusks?

Sixteen partial scholarships at The School of Jazz in Lenox were riding on a promised (and oft-announced) Newport scholarship grant. Admittedly, only \$1,000 had been firmly promised with another \$1,000 regarded as nearly certain. After the school had started, Newport failed to come through on the whole amount.

More paperback discographies from Debut Records, Box 46, Brande, Denmark. In the new batch are Louis Armstrong, Vol. 1 (1923-31, Vol. 2 (1932-46), Vol. 3 (1947-58), Charlie Parker (complete).

A London Observer reporter in Moscow writes that Willis Conover's "Music U.S.A." is not jammed in Moscow, and that "not one person here...does not listen to it... Yet the minute the music ends the jamming returns."

Francis Newton on Billie Holiday in the New Statesman: "...She was the Puccini heroine among blues-singers, or rather among jazz-singers, for though she sang a cabaret version of the blues incomparably, her natural idiom was the pop song. Her unique achievement was to have twisted this into a genuine expression of the major passion by means of a total disregard of its sugary tunes, or indeed of any tune other than her own few delicately crying elongated notes, phrased like Bessie Smith or Louis Armstrong in sack-cloth, sung in a thin, gritty, haunting voice whose natural mood was an un-resigned and voluptuous welcome for the pains of love...Suffering was her profession, but she did not accept it."

Father Norman O'Connor in The Boston Globe: "We (Billie Holiday and Charlie Bourgeois and O'Connor) stopped at the residence where I live at to have coffee. One of the young ladies who served the coffee was from Ireland. Billie spoke to her, got a kick out of the Irish brogue, and wanted to know if there were any more where she came from. There was another one in the kitchen, and we all moved there where the lady who was notorious for 'Strange Fruit' and narcotics went through a program of Irish melodies...There she was, standing in a kitchen, moving the hand so gently as she always did when she sang...The girls never stopped talking about the incident, and neither did Billie. She was there for forty-five minutes."

A good story, but notorious for Strange Fruit?

In Jazz 3: a quarterly of American music, there's an excellent analytical study of Lester Young by Louis Gottlieb; a beautifully written description of the funeral of a New Orleans jazzman by Sam Charters; and an interesting piece by Larry Austin on Jazz in Higher Education. Ken Hume has A Letter from Los Angeles, parts of which make one wonder again why Down Beat's reporter there doesn't expand his newsgathering route. Publication date of Sam Charters' The Country Blues (Rinehart) is November 5. Ross Russell writing a novel involved in part with jazz. And Ernest Borneman has a new non-jazz novel, Tomorrow Is Now (Neville Spearman, London).



Chris A. Strachwitz (10 Roble Road, Berkeley 5, California) is working on a guide to contemporary blues singers -- one that would evaluate "the style, feeling, and musical quality of the various artists." He will begin publishing the guide serially in Coda (John Norris, P.O. Box 87, Station J, Toronto 6, Ontario, Canada). He hopes eventually to compile complete biographical and discographical data on the singers he includes. He'd like any suggestions and help he can get. Also involved in finding more information about blues is the invaluable Record Research (131 Hart Street, Brooklyn 6, N. Y.) Compiler of their new Blues Research project is Anthony Rotante (2059 McGraw Avenue, Bronx 62, New York) and co-ordinator is Paul Sheatsley (130 West 12th Street, New York 11, N. Y.) They've begun in Recorded Americana, Bulletin 9 (distributed by Record Research) with the Texas and Mississippi scene. "We are very anxious," they note, "to get in touch with some collector or group of collectors familiar with Chicago labels and also for Philadelphia labels... All our friends from abroad are welcome to join in."

A note from I. L. Jacobs of P.O. Box 374, National City, California: "Has Marshall Stearns or one of his co-workers tried to collect copies of reverse-image three minutes Panoram 'soundies' from the late '30s and early 40s. Now growing scarce, my ancient distributor's catalog lists reels by Duke, Fats Waller, Red Allen, etc."

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# JAZZ BULLETIN

NEW YORK NEWS, compiled  
from reports by Frank  
Driggs, Dan Morgenstern  
and others

Trumpeter HAROLD "SHORTY" BAKER has left Duke Ellington, and is rehearsing a quartet which includes bassist Francesco Skeete. Trombonist BENNY MORTON in the Radio City Music Hall Symphony Orchestra. Trumpeter LOUIS BACON is back in action playing at the Vat in Palisades, New Jersey with Cliff Jackson weekends, and sitting in at Ryans, also giving out with Armstrong-styled vocals. Allen Eager is at the Duane, upstairs. Bassist AHMAD ABDUL-MALIK is with pianist Oscar Nord, at Billingsleys on Park Ave. LUCKY ROBERTS, legendary Harlem pianist, in good health again, is playing weekly for patients in a Veteran's Hospital. Organist MARLOWE MORRIS at the "L" Bar, Broadway & 148th Street. PAUL QUINICHETTE played a week-end at Henry's, in Brooklyn, with pianist Joe Knight and young drummer Vince Hickey, a former student of Baby Dodds. Pianist WILLIE GANT, who led some fine bands in the 20s, at Ceruttis. The band for YVES MONTAND's hugely successful one-man show produced by Norman Granz included JIMMY GUIFFRE, trombonist BILLY BYERS, bassist AL HALL, drummer CHARLIE PERSIP and guitarist JIM HALL. HARRY "SWEETS" EDISON booked for seven weeks at Birdland, opening opposite Mercer Ellington's big band...veteran trump-Organist RAM RAMIREZ is still at Branker's at 155th Street and St. Nicholas Place.

A new jazz club is the Sportsman's Lounge on West 50th Street, where BILLY GRAHAM's quartet played during August, followed by Lawrence '88' Keyes in September. The ADDERLEY BROTHERS' new rhythm section is BOBBY TIMMONS from the Messengers (replaced by Walter Davis Jr.), SAM JONES from Monks group and LOUIS HAYES from Horace Silver's quartet (replaced by Detroit Roy Brooks). The group recorded in mid-October in San Francisco for Riverside. Riverside also recorded guitarist WES MONTGOMERY (The Jazz Review, September) with his own trio (Melvyn Rhyne, organ; Paul Parker, drums) in New York in early October. The final personnel of QUINCY JONES' show-band will be Benny Bailey, Clark Terry, Lenny Johnson and Floyd Standifer, trumpets; Melba Liston, Quentin Jackson, Jimmy Cleveland and Ake Persson, trombones; Porter Kilbert, Phil Woods, Jerome Richardson, Budd Johnson and Sahib Shihab, reeds; Julius Watkins, french horn; Patti Bowen, piano; George 'Buddy' Catlett, bass; Kenny Burrell, guitar; Joe Harris, Drums. Standifer and Miss Liston will also write for the band. NAT PIERCE is rehearsing a big band for his December Birdland opening; sidemen include Paul Quinichette, Gene Quill, Eddie Bert, Frank Rehak, Burt Collins and singer Big Miller. Nat is also writing for WOODY HERMAN's new road-band and for the Broadway Revue which will open in November with Lonnie Sattin.

Trombonist-arranger Eddie Durham has been working regularly in the Freeport, Long Island area for the past two years. He has brother Roosevelt Durham on piano, altoist Clarence Gee Royster and either Slick Jones or Herbie Cowans on drums. ED LEWIS' gig band is back working social club dates in Harlem and on the Island, with musicians Paul Webster, Hilton Jefferson, Russell Bowles.

## MID-WEST ROUND-UP

Blues singing guitarist SCRAPPER BLACKWELL gave a concert in Indianapolis during September. Trombonist DAVE BAKER and guitarist WES MONTGOMERY gave a joint concert for the Indianapolis jazz club on October 4th.

Chicago: Vee Jay's first jazz lp features PAUL CHAMBERS. Others signed by Vee Jay include LEE MORGAN and WAYNE SHORTER (but not Art Blakey as reported here last month; he signed with Blue Note.) Argo recorded Minneapolis pianist HERB PILHOFER in September, and Chess recorded MUDDY WATERS singing Big Bill Broonzy songs. Strand recorded young girl singer PAT THOMAS backed up by a group that included Les Spann and Charlie Persip.

Kansas City: Composer-arranger and reed man TOMMY DOUGLAS with drummer Edythe Jackson and organist-vocalist Bobby Moore returned to K.C. after a summer playing in International Falls, Minnesota.

Ex-Luncheonford tenor star JOE THOMAS is gigging weekends and directing a funeral home during the day. JOHN JACKSON has switched from alto to tenor and works in a packing house during the week.

# Jazz Dance

## Mambo Dance

ROGER PRYOR DODGE

Any attempt at exhaustive description of an unfamiliar art is more likely to confuse with a welter of vivid and high sounding terms, than to convey the essence of the thing itself: such is the danger in writing on the jazz and mambo Dance. Although I certainly believe that we would profit by a detailed recording of both, it is not to my purpose to present one here. Rather, I will discuss what is already familiar and point out some of the problems that arise when a dance of "doing" is transformed into a dance of "presentation." I hope to show that the idea of a musical parallel to them is fallacious and breaks down on analysis.

The arts of performance, specifically dance and music—we dance, we sing—are certainly authentic arts, but by their very nature they transport their "doers" beyond any intelligent consideration of what they are doing while they are doing it. Self-criticism by an artist is objective examination of his finished work; it does not take place simultaneously with creation. Thus any real self-criticism of these arts must come through a later observance of the performance as reproduced by screen or phonograph. Even when the folk-popular dance reaches its highest pitch of excellence self-criticism at the time of performance does not become a part of the art.

In its early state the dance of "doing" became a major art; but one which loses all sustaining power and satisfaction when uprooted from its native soil. Music, because it was more easily transplanted, did not deteriorate under these conditions, but was able to develop and sustain itself without, like the dance, having to rely on expedients introduced by the individual performer. Music that serves the dance prepares itself during its improvisational phase for the coming of the composer, who will first work in the spirit of improvisation and finally go beyond it into extended forms. Until music's inevitable decline it was this individual performer-composer who charged its material and forms with greater and greater significance, but in the beginning he did not institute any new ways, new forms or formats.



The dance as a "doing" lacks composition, except in so far as a few over-all formations are resorted to for the sake of convenience; nor is composition the dancer's concern. But there comes a time when, under the eyes of spectators, the dancer is made conscious of the effect he is producing on others, and his "doing" is no longer for himself alone. If he leaves the dance-floor for a platform and exhibits his steps to an audience he is faced with the problem of how to present his scant material. As his previous concern with the act of "doing" has switched to a new concern of presentation he must have recourse to a purely optional framework to hold the interest of his audience. Within this framework he sets his dance, he composes; but throughout, his practices must be optional rather than, as in jazz music, proceeding through the means of a conventional framework. Unlike the musicians, he finds that he had no material in a state ready for presentation. This explains much of what I shall speak of in connection with the presentation problems of the Lindy Hop.

I take it as a premise that art springs from the folk subconscious. Without trying to explain my reasons for holding this theory of the folk origin of art, I should like to add that I find folk expression alone far more significant than any individual expression that fails to take advantage of folk material. How much of this basic material any artist may choose to retain in his own work is a matter of personal taste; but observation has taught me that only in the very late stages of an art is it advisable for him to rely on purely optional means of his own. Folk expression seems to be the result of a built-in mechanism, like a bird's nest-building instinct, which provides a powerful and unself-conscious driving force for the creation of strong and healthy art forms. Once the drive has spent itself these forms become static—they no longer develop. Anything further becomes what I call the use of personal options which needs a rare esthetic acumen to guide and preserve it—at least in today's world.

Let me say that when a sophisticated art deriving from the folk aspires to a major position it will only be successful if the folk art from which it sprang had itself already developed far beyond a sim-

ple back-country expression. Otherwise we would merely have a new folk flavor shot into the arm of academic art, not a genuine new art springing from the folk.

Let us look at some differences between music and dance. The folk subconsciously developed the song form, which with the greatest ease encompassed any time length from eight to sixteen bars, lasting, in the blues, for instance, as long as forty seconds. With the possibility of variety through different instrumental solo passages and further variety added by the imagination of the players in the ensemble, together with a nod from the leader signaling the last chorus, we have a piece of music easily four minutes in length that conveys to the listener a feeling all of a piece. This entire procedure can come about with little thought. In the dance the longest stretch is a combination of single steps, which put together, constitute what, in dance terminology, is called a "step." None of these steps actually takes more than two bars, while most of them take only a half or whole bar. The Charleston, for example, takes one bar; Boogie Woogie, two bars; Jig Walk, a bar and a half. While music is thought of in tunes, dance is thought of in steps; and between the two there is a great disparity in time length. In performance we expect from both dance and music a duration of two to three minutes. A piece of music easily meets this requirement in its natural and subconscious development within a conventional frame, but in the dance, the dancer himself must substitute an optional frame in order to fill out the time. A dancer normally uses only the steps at his disposal, and in any order. His dance never gives the onlooker the same feeling of the progress he has when listening to a tune. Our only cue to the approaching end of the dance comes from the music. This is evident when we watch any floor full of dancers, whether they are dancing in couple or completely apart. Any dance composition, however brief, is the optional invention of either the dancer or choreographer. But whether optional or not, the choreographer **must** eventually intervene. Just as one sequence of solos and ensembles in a band contributes more to the feeling of a whole than some other, so one sequence of steps will give a greater over-all impact than some other. While in one instance we are working with the arrangement of large blocks of integrated

music, in the other we are working with the arrangement of short steps. In music, I believe, there is a carry-through of mood inherent in the melodic process itself, while in the dance any prevailing mood derives not so much from the sequence of steps; but up to now such movements expression superimposed on the material by the dancer. Of course bodily movement and stance can vary regardless of what steps are used, and these enforce the pleasure we derive from rightly qualified steps; but up to now such movements have not crystalized or been codified in any grammar of the dance. And so I say that a group of "pick up" musicians with no rehearsal can give us sessions of music that have over-all unity, while unrehearsed dancers can only start dancing with the music and keep going until the last note. Very often in the Savoy, groups of dancers used to circle a pair who would dance furiously for only about fifteen seconds, and then be followed by another pair. It was terrific dancing—the greatest—but it gave no feeling of inherent unity; nor, because of the dancers' very brevity did one demand this.

This unorganized state is of the nature of the dance, and this is not said in disparagement. From the time a dancer walks onto the dance-floor he is in a state of exaltation in which he threads his way through the throng or remains in one place, repeating over and over a few steps in no set sequence until the music stops. This for him is a complete experience, both esthetically and physically—as exhilarating as any physical exercise: taking a long walk, skiing or fighting waves on a beach. A few steps done with little variation will satisfy for a whole evening—and evening after evening. The remarkable thing about this activity is that its artistic significance carries to onlookers, and they, through the power of empathy and their esthetic sensitivity participate in the dancer's experience. They are also conscious of a silhouette in space, something hardly intuited by the dancer.

The spectator at a dance-hall can receive the greatest kick by just watching the dancers in context of the whole whirling assemblage, picking out here and there a couple for his particular attention. From his vantage point he may see wonderful things, or he may get only tantalizing glimpses of something terrific; but altogether the impact of the music and the beat of hundreds of feet provide him with a

Don Silverstein



completely satisfying experience. The difficulties start when a single dancer or a single couple is taken from the crowded floor and exhibited on a stage where the poor individual or the couple must start dancing and continue long enough to satisfy the spectators. As soon as the dancer is removed from his dance-floor to a stage the spectator feels he can demand a kind of performance he never expected to witness when he was a by-stander in the dance-hall. Though the dance may be precisely the same as it was on the dance-floor, something is missing. But with a band, granted it played in a concert hall as well as it did in the dance-hall, we would find that it still had lost none of its original impact. In fact even on the far-removed medium of records it still reveals all of its old dance-hall glory of invention and playing style: **nothing** is missing. The dancer, however, rightly finds that he **must** arrange; also he usually feels the necessity of injecting an over-dose of showmanship (in fact he is likely to seem inept if he doesn't). Whereas the band, without changing anything in its performance, withstands the change to the other side of the foot-lights (or to a record), the dancer has to cater (and I believe he should) to what is expected of a "presentation." Here the optional dictates of a choreographer must come in, and with the steps and talent at hand, create a presentation which, while showing off the dancers' abilities, projects some feeling of over-all unity. This is the constant preoccupation of dance production and of the choreographer who uses strictly dance material. (There is also a choreography of miscellaneous material not necessarily dance in nature, which is another matter.)

After presenting these theories, let me mention the long line of steps derived from Negro dancing. None is over two bars long. More than two bars are called combinations. Out of what may be hundreds of steps a few, for one reason or another, have been taken up, though they may not necessarily merit the special esteem they enjoy. The greatest step was the Charleston; it is truly generic in character. When done to a charleston rhythm in the music it could be infinitely varied without losing any of the quality that we sense to be **charleston**. Its step was but one bar long. Next came the Black Bottom, which consisted of a small combination lasting two bars in which the dancer played up to

the name by spanking his bottom a couple of times, although the dance is said to derive from wading in deep mud at low tide. Then there is Truckin' which is nothing more than a walking dance in which the dancer bends and straightens his legs as he walks. Combined with the Suzy-Q it makes, when done by comedian Pigmeat Markam, an extremely fascinating dance. All of these steps had music written in their name and were featured in musicals.

Although the Charleston was done as a couple dance in ball-rooms, it wasn't until the Lindy Hop came along that we arrive at what has become a permanent national dance. With its many highly integrated steps—a necessity for a "led" couple dancing with break-away—we have a popular dance on which many variants have been grafted, such as the style deviation of the jitterbugs, the detached attitude conjured up by bop music in the Apple Jack, or the Rock 'n' Roll dance that has been sweeping the country.

The Lindy Hop is the only dance which has both cross-rhythms and more than two time values. Besides the steps which are synchronized with the musical phrases in the Lindy, there are steps which cross the rhythm of the music in the same fashion as polyrhythms in music. The extra time value, besides that of the commonly used slow and quick steps, is found when the dancers do a double-quick two-step in place of one slow step. We get cross-rhythms in the Foxtrot and the Peabody as a result of the breaking of the tight hold music had on dance during the nineteenth century. Then all steps were tied down by the tyranny of the musical first beat. When ragtime came along with eighth-note and sixteenth-note beats between the two main quarter-note beats (2/4 time), dancing in common time was liberated. Interjected notes tend to mitigate the power of the strong first down beat thereby acquiring a near equal stress between these down beats, a procedure that led to the character of popular 4/4 time. With syncopation and cross-rhythms in the music of ragtime, the main beat became definitely 4/4 time. Dancers started to sway from side to side in a jog trot (two-to-a-bar) in the rag dances that preceded the Foxtrot. All feeling for bar lines had vanished. This led eventually into the One Step and later into the Peabody. For a short while the Foxtrot was a matter of four steps to the bar in the quick stepping fashion of a fox, but this gave way to dancing single steps





consisting of two-to-a-bar together with two-steps, as in its present state. But the previous step-and-music identity was completely broken down, opening the way to cross-rhythms, of steps taking one and a half bars. This freedom was never attained by Cuban dancing, but was characteristic of the Tango through its own course of development.

This complete breakdown of adherence to the first musical beat made possible the introduction of cross-rhythms in the Lindy. Whereas many of the cross-rhythms possible in the Foxtrot are due to the aimless meandering of the dancers, in the Lindy the presence of cross-rhythms was a matter of precise steps, either definitely cross-rhythmic or definitely mono-rhythmic. A polyrhythmic character between music and dance is clearly felt when the 3-count (1½ bars) step is being used while with the use of the 4-count (2 bars) step the dance is coordinated with the musical phrases.

And so with this rhythmic freedom and the aforementioned double-quick two-step which, by the way, also came about in the Mambo and was called the Cha, Cha, Cha, we arrive at a highly developed folk-popular dance. With a variety of steps in couple position and a short space during the break-away for individual invention, the Lindy becomes a most complete dance, incorporating in itself any number of other steps. These steps were adaptable to the widest range of tempos. Of course the Lindy Hop, like any other great dance, possessed its own highly significant style and stance. Style and stance went beyond the mere deportment of any great exhibition dancers, whether Spanish (gypsy or classical) or our own ballroom performers. Although all great Lindy dancers possess a style and distinction of their own, within this style there is complete freedom of movement, opening the way to great bodily invention.

Out of the Lindy Hop or in conjunction with it came what the dancers called "the routine." These routines were a matter of changing from the couple position as led by the male to a team position (such as is done on the stage). Steps done in this position naturally had to be set and learned. Each couple made up its own routine or used that of others. The dance allowed for the use of the entire step gamut of their repertory. With the introduction of the new material the dance took on an entirely different character from the couple dance of the Lindy Hop: the "swing-

ing" feeling of the continual break-away and return was broken up. The routine was like the development of a symphony or one of the alternate strains used by a jazz band. Interpolation gave a special lift to the original theme when return is made to it. The same kind of lift is given the dance when the couples return from the routine to the right-turn break-away. Using the routine was the first sign in the Lindy Hop of creating a counter-section of a different character, something to set off the original Lindy Hop to greater advantage.

The Big Apple was another set dance, done in circular formation, in which the dancers either followed a given procedure or responded to the commands of a caller. It was a sort of square-dance in the round.

Another couple dance which had a short life was the Shag, a 3-count dance (1½ bars). A description makes it sound like a lot of hopping, but when it was danced well it became actually a smooth dance which at the same time retained the strong beat of solid hopping, the smoothness being achieved by the gentle swaying bodies above the quick foot work.

Sadly enough, out of this whole dance mania, this sweating it out night after night all over the country, plus the presence on the scene of innumerable great dancers, all contributing their own style and personal invention, none of it developed into the professional stage-dance. Stage dancing with its pocket-full of musical comedy steps remained unenriched by the Lindy Hop. While teams explored the possibilities of the Waltz, Polka, Tango, Rumba, Mambo and what not, nobody explored this really great dance for what it could contribute to the stage. Under the aegis of Herbert White the best dancers of the Savoy Ballroom were formed into Whitey's Lindy Hoppers. They danced in movie houses, in motion pictures, and in Broadway musicals; they were featured at the New York World's Fair. But nothing really came of all this and the Lindy Hop was never integrated into show business.

While the great Lindy Hoppers stood on the side lines, a new breed of dancer, fortified with ballet and modern dance training, took over show business and danced to some form of jazz music. The new dance has none of the style, refined or not, of the Negro dance. With its few movements derived from jazz it became a choreographer's idea of what dancers with ballet or modern training should

do to jazz music. All of tv, movie and musicals are loaded with this type of dance. The days of the good old dance-man with his pocket-full of steps now seems a golden era of the stage dance.

The jazz dance, other than tap, has had very few eminent representatives on the stage. The best and among the earliest were the Berry Brothers—Ananias, James and Warren. The whole act was built around the extraordinary ability of Ananias Berry. Aside from his technical proficiency his strut itself was marvelous—and it was quite a feat to build a composition around the few possible ways of strutting. But The Berry Brothers did, and their dance, **Papa De Da Da**, was the greatest of its kind. Another famous dancer was Earl "Snake Hips" Tucker, the originator of the **snake hips** dance, a title inadequate to describe the wonderful thing Earl Tucker made of it. His was a loose-jointed body which together with his great ability as a dancer made this dance with its short pantomime sequence impossible to imitate. Very often a dancer will capitalize on a special gift, which, incorporated into his artistic creations, make his dancing unique. It is always fatal for even the greatest dancers to attempt what they are not cut out to do—that is, physically fit to perform.

There were many other teams who depended on either excellent comedy or excellent dancing (tap or otherwise) to show themselves off, but except for the great comedy acts, no dancers ever possessed the greatness of the Berry Brothers or Snake Hips Tucker.

Tap dancing, a category within jazz, has a complete academy and many talented dancers, who, with nowhere to turn and lacking the imagination to foster Negro non-tap dancing, found themselves sucked into the tap convention curriculum. As an accessory to singing, clowning, or even other types of dancing, tap gives a definite punctuation to the rhythm, but although its academy is thorough and complete it tends to undermine a dancer's inquisitiveness because of the fund of material it presents him with. It is precise and fun to do, but its charge is always that of astounding virtuosity, which, once seen, continually diminishes in interest and bears little repetition. Without the personality of a Bill Robinson, accepted tap procedure has become pretty dull.

# THE STORY OF JAZZ BOOKS IN AMERICA 1935-55

SHELDON MEYER

This is a tale with a few high spots and far too many lows. Jazz, during much of its sixty-odd years of existence, has been hampered by immaturity and neglect on the part of both critics and book publishers. If book publishers are Johnny-come-latelies to the field, so are critical standards which make jazz writing significant. Jazz is now enjoying a boom, but it was not ever thus—and it is my purpose to show how jazz has fared at publishers' hands. The 1920's may now be called "The Jazz Age," but as far as public appreciation goes, the label is a misnomer. The public thought of jazz in terms of Paul Whiteman, George Gershwin, and Ferde Grofé. True jazz could be found mostly only on the "race" labels of record companies or in clubs deep in the Negro districts of big cities, and as such, was the property of the unsophisticated plus a few initiates. Under

these conditions, it is not surprising that there was virtually no jazz criticism.

Conditions through much of the 1930's were no more propitious for jazz. The Depression had hit publishing hard, and no one was willing to risk anything on so chancy a field as jazz. In the mid-thirties, help came from an unexpected source—Europe. In the course of two years, three books originally written in French appeared on the American scene. Charles Delaunay's **Hot Discography** (the first jazz reference book) brought together valuable information about the early jazz sessions. The other two books were by Robert Goffin and Hughes Panassié. It was Panassié's book, **Hot Jazz**, the prototype of the jazz writer of the 1930's. He and his kind were not critics, but sometimes gushing enthusiasts. Panassié did, however, possess an ability to express himself, a fresh enthusiasm for the music, and, occasionally, a sensitive ear and a perceptive view of the subject. Because he took jazz seriously, he represented an important advance.

**Hot Jazz** was written partly out of enthusiasm for white jazz of the 1920's. Later, when he had heard more of the Negro jazz of the same period, Panassié fell for it and in **The Real Jazz**, in 1940, he condemned music he had previously praised. His latest book, **Guide to Jazz** (1956), carries the view to absurdity as he castigates the entire bop movement for "not playing jazz." It is a sad commentary on the jazz writing of the 1930's to call this wildly opinionated man an important pioneer critic, but probably only Robert Goffin and Otis Ferguson were of equal importance in the pre-war period. All three were a superior sort of jazz fan, and it is to their credit that they aroused interest in the serious study of jazz. Jazz books have remained under the cloud of the Panassié approach for the better part of two decades. This type of criticism reached its depths in the 1940's in the battles between the "moldy figs" and the "progressives," with both camps spending most of their time sniping at the other and madly boosting their own enthusiasms. One important jazz history declared that Louis Armstrong's work degenerated badly after the early Hot Five recordings, while another history discounted New Orleans and treated Lennie Tristano as the apex of jazz's development.

It is little wonder that publishers

shied away from undertaking jazz books when there was such bitter feuding within the field itself. Until some level of objectivity and reasonable critical standards could be established, most publishers preferred to stay away from the subject. Still, a few had taken a chance and some were rewarded with works which made important contributions to the study of jazz.

The first of these important jazz books appeared in 1939. It was **Jazzmen**, and its principal authors were Frederic Ramsey and Charles Edward Smith. **Jazzmen** attempted to set down in print the record of jazz's beginnings in New Orleans and its spread north in the 1920's. Ramsey and Smith sought out important early figures, and much of the story is told in the words of these men. Part of the book suffered from the Panassié faults—gushy writing, too great boosting of Dixieland and New Orleans jazz, formlessness.

The importance of **Jazzmen** cannot be overestimated, though. It was the first substantial work of research in the field. As researchers, its authors brought professionalism into jazz writing, and most of the worthwhile jazz books which followed have been extensions of their approach. Rudi Blesh's **Shining Trumpets** (1946) investigated the New Orleans background and the blues tradition in the same well-documented fashion but suffered from Blesh's violent prejudices for the traditionalist position and against most jazz after 1928.

At the other end of the spectrum was Barry Ulanov's **A History of Jazz in America** (1952) which recorded much valuable information about the swing and bop movements but made some foolish statements about New Orleans jazz. Of the general histories, the best is probably Marshall Stearns' **The Story of Jazz** (1956), which covers jazz's roots and development, sometimes in too peremptory fashion but is, a decided improvement on previous jazz histories in that it does not take sides for or against any particular school. Several more limited studies have followed **Jazzmen's** approach. Rudi Blesh and Harriet Janis in **They All Played Ragtime** thoroughly researched the long-neglected ragtime movement. Equally important was Alan Lomax's job of editing the Library of Congress Jelly Roll Morton recordings and interviews. These, published as **Mister Jelly Roll** (1949), form the most revealing portrait of a jazz artist found between book

covers. Finally, rising above all other books in the **Jazzmen** tradition, is Nat Shapiro and Nat Hentoff's **Hear Me Talkin' To Ya** (1955), which pieced together in intelligent fashion statements and remarks by jazz figures forming a consecutive record of jazz's development.

Indirectly, **Jazzmen** had one bad influence. It focused attention on the "jazz epic"—that is, the off-told story of how jazz originated in Africa, got its formal start in New Orleans and progressed up to the Miles Davis Capitol records of 1949. No study of jazz has seemed complete without much of this detailed recital. If every study of American life had to include a resume of American history, no reader would stand for such belaboring of the obvious. Jazz writers, however, do not seem to believe their readers capable grasping all this without another force-feeding session, and it is therefore little wonder that jazz has not been taken seriously in many circles.

It is a sad fact that jazz had often been its own worst enemy as far as publication is concerned: bad writing, poor critical standards, factionalism—all have hurt. Perhaps the most damaging blow to jazz's drive for acceptability has been the link with vice which jazz has had in the public eye. There have always been lurid elements in jazz, particularly in the early days when so much of it was played in "tenderloin" districts. Jazz has outgrown most of this, yet countless people still relate it to liquor, drugs, and prostitution, and look upon jazz musicians as rather disreputable characters, and like or dislike them and their music for the wrong reasons. Publishers frequently insist on emphasizing the sensational aspects of books about jazz as was done with Billie Holiday's life story, **Lady Sings the Blues** (1955), an important social and jazz document all but ruined by its lurid handling. Often, the writers themselves contribute to this false impression. In Mezz Mezzrow's biography **Really The Blues**, author Bernard Wolfe constructs Mezzrow as a great "character"—always in and out of jail, on or off the "stuff," but lovable and indestructible.

No one can deny that a number of jazz musicians have been involved in vice and dissipation, and this must be taken into account when portraying the individual jazzman. It should be kept in its place, however, and not be allowed to interfere with the study of jazz as an art.

Book publishers differ little from other purveyors of public taste. They are attracted to subjects because they are talked about even if they know little about them. A few publishers are able to recognize good jazz books and others know where to go for advice but, over the years, many publishers simply have been had. They have allowed writers to convince them to bring out books for which there is not only no need, but which are distinctly second-rate. The result has been a flood of jazz histories, reference books, and anthologies. The anthologies have had an especially evil effect, preserving for posterity magazine pieces of the 1930's and the 1940's which should have been buried. Such palming off of the mediocre cannot help but hinder jazz's attempt to get a serious hearing.

The remarkable thing, of course, is that despite the cavalier treatment which the publisher (with his jazzy titles and avant-garde jackets) and the writer have given the jazz public, good jazz books have appeared and have sold reasonably well. I say "reasonably well" because, with two exceptions, the most popular jazz books have, at most, sold fifteen thousand copies. Only two jazz books have sold more, both of them publishing "naturals." Leonard Feather's **Encyclopedia of Jazz** (1955) filled a void in jazz publishing as a reference work to which the neophyte could turn for a quick knowledge of jazz and which the more serious student could have on hand to verify certain points. Orrin Keepnews and Bill Grauer's **Pictorial History of Jazz** (1955) sold well, despite the poor quality of the illustrations, because big picture books usually find a good market.

It should surprise no one to learn that jazz books have often had wider acceptance in Europe than in America. A good American jazz book is almost assured publication in Europe, and books such as Stearns' and Ulanov's histories and **Hear Me Talkin' To Ya** have appeared or will appear in half a dozen European countries. This represents a kind of reverse lend-lease arrangement, for significant jazz publishing began in the 1930's with European writers, and there have been outstanding examples since—particularly André Hodeir's vastly important attempt to analyze jazz's structure and significance, **Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence**. Now, however, American writers and readers seem to be catching up. Today's jazz critics are

able to write effective English, and some of them have the knowledge of music theory that made Hodeir's book unique when it appeared. The best writers have critical standards and are able to write without bias for or against any particular school of jazz. In addition, there is a growing public in this country for such writing. The next few years might see the publication of many significant books on jazz.

I use the word "might" because there is no guarantee this will happen. More jazz books are being published because the subject itself is "hot," and unfortunately, there is the possibility that jazz will be overpublished. Too many second-rate books, and books covering the same areas, are being published. Both publishers and writers should declare a moratorium unless they have something original to contribute to the field. There are many topics which demand attention but have not yet received it. In some areas, research will have to be started soon if material is not to be irretrievably lost.

There are three general areas which should prove especially fruitful for book topics. One is the roots and development of jazz. This includes investigation of the influence which produced jazz as a distinctive music form, the social background of the Negro leading to jazz, and the history of the music forms that make up jazz—a book, for example, on the development of the blues. Another area is the story of jazz's creators.

No one has yet written a satisfactory jazz biography, but the material is there—colorful, dramatic, humorous, sometimes tragic. Finally, there is the job of musical analysis which André Hodeir began. This means moving away from the treatment of jazz as folk music and applying the apparatus of serious musical criticism to the subject.

It remains to be seen whether writers and publishers are up to the task which has been set for them. Great progress has been made in the past decade, but there is much still to be done. Without a good library, jazz will never attain the importance it might otherwise have. Phonograph records have preserved jazz performances for us and will continue to do so; but only in book form can jazz find the analysis and searching criticism which is so necessary for the development and serious acceptance of any art. Jazz deserves the same attention that other, older arts have had.

# RECONSIDERATIONS / Fats Navarro

**Double Talk, The Skunk, Boperation, Lady Bird** (alternate take): Blue Note 1531-32  
**Sweet Georgia Brown:** Counterpoint 549.  
**Jumping For Jane, Half-Step Down Please:** Victor 1017.  
**Dextrose:** Savoy 9003.  
**Boppin a Riff:** Savoy 9012.  
**Move:** Dial 212.

During the past few years various comments on the work of Fats Navarro have seemed to me grossly unfair and inaccurate as estimates of his style and achievement. I shall use the records listed above to show various aspects of his style. They all seem to me to illustrate his originality and uniqueness.

H. A. Woodfin in **The Saturday Review**, Don Gold in **Down Beat** and Leonard Feather in a booklet called **Jazz** published by Pacific Press have all said something to the effect that Fats was a man with a great talent who died before he had a chance to explore that talent and to develop a really original style. (Gold's statements may influence newly interested jazz fans along the wrong paths. **Metronome's** "deuces" rated most of the sides in Bird's **Koko**, **Billie's Bounce**, **Now's the Time** session three stars—remember that Feather called Ulanov and himself, two of the "deuces", among the first to understand modern jazz). But I was extremely disappointed to read Bill Crow's review of Fats in **The Jazz Review** (December, 1958), since most of Crow's work has been perceptive. To quote Crow, "Much of his concept is frankly taken from Dizzy Gillespie's work of the same period." Not so, if one listens closely to Fats. Fats was certainly an individual musician and none of his influences dominated him. Like Bud Powell he listened to many sources and incorporated them into his own style. Admittedly Dizzy was an influence but so was his section partner in his Andy Kirk days, Howard McGhee, and Charlie Shavers whose sound and attack he dug. (Shavers is, I believe, a distant cousin.)

The McGhee influence on Navarro can be readily seen in the sides they cut together for Blue Note, **Double Talk, The Skunk, Boperation**. Another interesting reference for comparison

is the versions of **Sweet Georgia Brown** cut by each in 1947; Navarro's on Counterpoint 549, McGhee's on Crown 5004. The overall effect of McGhee's playing in that period was much like Dizzy's (his most important modern influence) and Roy Eldridge's. He emphasized a hot legato swing and played with considerable originality. Though Fats was a more thinking musician, some of McGhee's musical vocabulary got into Fats. One can note it in the similarity of the **Georgia Brown** solos; especially the long descending runs in the bridge.

In many ways his conception is diametrically opposed to Gillespie's who, like many swingmen usually employed a "running the changes" style of improvisation. The success of his solos depend upon the emotion and freshness of melodic invention with which he played. Sometimes Gillespie is lazy and plays stock phrases, though these are usually phrases he invented himself; much of the work he has done for Granz has been quite uneven in quality. Fats, on the other hand, was much more concerned with form. In many ways he was a more self-conscious musician than Dizzy is.

Navarro has been accused of "lacking Diz's fire." Most musicians lack Diz's fire, but this alone does not make them inferior. They feel differently and express themselves differently. Fats was a real classicist, a type of classicism represented in the swing period by men like Benny Carter, Teddy Wilson and Lester Young.

Listen to two of his lesser known but great solos, **Half Step Down Please** and **Jumping for Jane** with Coleman Hawkins. They are both short, but they are gems. His tone is fuller and broader than Diz's, his phrasing less hurried and more staccato. The level of melodic invention on these two sides was high even for him; there is not a cliché to be found. He was remarkably conscientious in this respect, like a good housekeeper who pounces on dirt the minute she sees it. But, he could make common-property licks sound like he created them; he would play a stock blues phrase and it would come out Fats. One device he sometimes used to do this was to

delay, and then play the first few notes of the phrase faster than ordinary. This "spitting notes" technique of his can be heard in the last few bars of **Dextrose** with Dexter Gordon on Savoy. His double-timing was also remarkable. Most musicians aren't too concerned about what they play in a double-time passage; they use it for surprise or shock and are preoccupied with **when** to use it to the best effect, as a drummer is concerned with the right time to drop a bomb. The composition of the phrase in their double-timing is of less importance to them, and many times the passage may be merely running up and down scales in key. But Fats maintained the same high level of invention that he did on slow blues and ballads where he had more time to think. A perfect example of this double-time skill can be heard on the alternate take of **Lady Bird**.

No matter what his personal frustrations, his time and technique were always near-perfect. In one of his longest solos, **Boppin' a Riff**, he can be heard effortlessly building to a fantastic peak, a double-time passage that otherwise only a trumpet player of Diz's technique could execute. Incidentally, his short lines on this passage seem to show a kind of quizzical sense of humor not usually attributed to him.

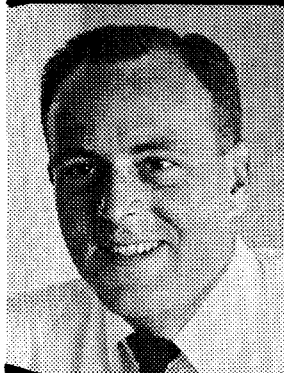
Occasionally Fats could create savagely, as on **Move**, but the bulk of even his up tempo work was relaxed and thoughtful. His lip was as good as Gillespie's but he used the upper register more tastefully in the context of his playing.

Finally, if Fats were only a copy of Diz he couldn't have had the influence he did. He certainly marked Clifford Brown's long staccato lines. His playing also affected two lesser known but fine trumpet players, Joe Gordon and Red Rodney—as well as the early works of Art Farmer. And Kenny Dorham—listen to his solo on **Royal Roost** (Victor) 3046 to hear how close Dorham's playing was to Fats'.

It is impossible to say whether Fats Navarro's work would have evolved had he lived. But by 1950 his style was mature, and his contribution to jazz trumpet playing large.

Harvey Pekar

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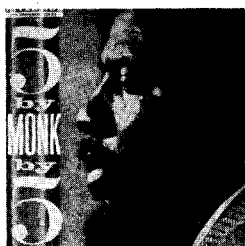
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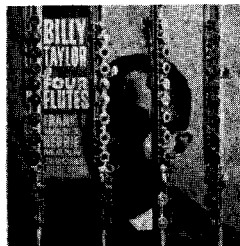
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