

THE JAZZ REVIEW

Volume 2 / Number 11 / December 1959 / Fifty Cents



EARLY DUKE

Buster Smith
Wilbur Ware

SPIRITUALS to SWING

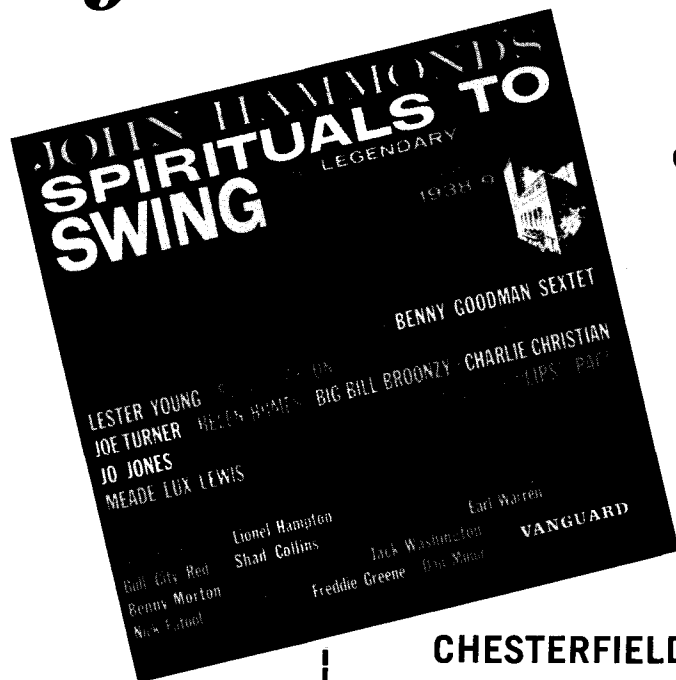
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LETTERS

NO CROWING

About Bill Crow: I value very much his perceptiveness and his serious concern with the morality of good craftsmanship: qualities which I think too many artists today brush off quite foolishly as "relative" or "temporary." I think the best of Bill Crow's stuff shows that reconciliation of good criticism with good reviewing which is to be found in the writing of Conrad Aiken and James Agee.

I'd like to suggest, though, that a number of times in the August issue that Mr. Crow lets his precision and maybe his timidity about making judgments mislead him into a kind of nervous auditing which is not criticism nor, I think, any valid substitute for it. To me, with an admittedly ephemeral musical education, the Pepper Adams and Gene Ammons reviews were hardly more than jumbles of meagerly organized observations and personal trivia ("I don't find his tone lovely." "Gene and Idrees sound beautiful . . . Both have a strong, sure feeling for the blues") which either don't suggest any kind of observation or more important, which do nothing to strengthen or clarify the subsequent criticisms. I think that what Mr. Crow misses here is that recreation of the form, the pattern of the work under discussion which is the hallmark of Agee's or Aiken's perception. I hope that Mr. Crow doesn't think this comparison pompous, because I don't. At his best, he has the self-effacing interest in clarity and discernment of what is good which distinguishes both these critics from their more guru-like colleagues. And—also like them—he has the head-start on other critics of being creator in his own right. So I wish he would leave the school marm bits to others.

Donald Phelps
Brooklyn, N. Y.

IN AND OUT

In my article, "Inner and outer jazz" (*The Jazz Review*, September), I don't object so much to the frightful number of typos, although my English is poor enough without making it sound worse. Even the misplaced line that ends the top paragraph on the right column of page 20, was accepted with the feeling that this is the way life is. But when I got to the left column on page 21 and found two lines from the description of Ellington stuck into the one describing Basie—i.e. the second and third lines of the column, beginning "these contrasting elements", which belong in the next paragraph, after the line "out rounded forms with a sensitive, planned use of . . .", I felt the entire article was turned into gibberish.

Or take the next paragraph, same column, when I wrote, "the following propositions are offered for consideration," and what came out was "the following proportions". What's the use of spending time and energy badly needed for other things in writing the piece, when it turns out like this?

There is only one thing to do, and that is for me to take a full page ad in *Billboard* proclaiming "Finkelstein has stopped writing for *The Jazz Review*."

Sidney Finkelstein
Brooklyn, N. Y.

ECHOES

When I tore myself away from the fascinating documentary—one of the many that have appeared in *The Jazz Review*—of Lester Young, I read with dismay Paul Oliver's review of Samuel Charters' *Jazz, New Orleans 1885-1957*. The dismay arose from the fact that I've enjoyed Mr. Oliver's piece and one item—I think a letter—that neatly placed Muddy Waters in the scheme of things. Though sometimes dull and repetitious, Charters' book is an important contribution to the study of jazz backgrounds. I am in complete agreement with Mr. Oliver's comment on the distorted view of New Orleans that results from a study that concentrates only on those who have remained in that city throughout their lives. Mr. Charters does not emphasize sufficiently the fact that this leaves out some of the greatest New Orleans musicians.

I am distressed that Paul Oliver should help to perpetuate the indirect slur upon jazz historians implied in the concept of a Museum of Jazz Mythology. The reference to the jazz history project being financed by the Ford Foundation is irresponsible. I know—as do most of my colleagues—that William Russell (associated with this project) is perhaps the greatest living authority on New Orleans jazz. He is also meticulously, scrupulously honest. His description of the parent style (*The Jazz Record Book*) has never been surpassed. Though a student of Schönberg, he appreciated the importance in jazz, not of written music, but of the impact of oral traditions. To someone who prefers to think jazz just grew like Topsy this will not matter. To those who recognize jazz as a new musical gesture it is of the utmost importance.

Those who think that there is a cult of critics who ride the tailgate should read with care the second paragraph of Ernest Borneman's article "Creole Echoes". As Mr. Borneman points out, even if one has corrected errors and changed views according to new data and the continued activity of his little gray cells—he is still likely to be quoted in terms of his original presentation of the subject. Worse still, errors of fact and outmoded concepts, however carefully they have been re-considered in print, are given a new lease on life by writers who haven't done extensive research and by polemical pole-cats.

Naturally, when I speak of jazz, I speak of a band style, an instrumental and orchestral style. It is not merely a use of blues scales nor for a notable rhythmic style. It is a way of playing instruments, it is jazz intonation and manipulation of the beat within the context of a "living" rhythm—and there are many jazz musicians who have little understanding of either, though they can read like crazy.

The piano did not assume importance in jazz until such men as James P. Johnson and Jelly Roll Morton created major styles. Jelly was first a sporting house pianist whose style was influenced by such orchestral jazz as that of King Oliver's band—then (1920's) a jazz pianist playing in jazz and in jazz bands.) Isolated parallels to jazz instrumental usage occurred in many places—as I have noted in articles and in *The Jazz Record Book*—in honky-tonk music, minstrels, etc. In fact, wherever Negro American music had taken root. And a suggestion of jazz sounds undoubtedly reached Europe long before the first jazz bands made the trip.

So far as I know, no responsible critic-historian of jazz claims it to be a product of one city, wholly and completely. But it seems incontestable that New Orleans music was essential in the creation of instrumental jazz and its unique approach to timbre, phrasing and intonation. Those who claim there is a school of historical writing that makes New Orleans not only the home of jazz but the occasion for a virgin birth should explain just what writings (and whose) they refer to.

Bands in the north, both Negro and white, were recording both while and before King Oliver recorded. I'm afraid no one has thought to make a comprehensive collection of such fascinating historical items. *Discography* has a section on "other early bands" that should interest those concerned with jazz origins, for some of these records indicate the gradual influence of jazz on dance music in the north. A study of early records by the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra confirms that its mastery of jazz was acquired only gradually—the band did not have it to begin with. Those who wish to cite non-New Orleans origins should cite records, and they'd better be damned good ones. Joe Oliver is up there on the stand, leaning over to George Wettling (who just ran down there in his Pierce-Arrow race with the turned-down handle-bars) and is saying, "Hotter'n a forty-five!"

To those who may be curious as to how I formulate this question of origins, I did a chapter earlier this year, "*New Orleans And Traditions In Jazz*", for the forthcoming Hentoff-McCarthy anthology.

One further thought. I strongly endorse Mr. Borneman's idea of digging. All too few writers seem to realize what real research means in the way of hard work!

Charles Edward Smith
New York



Contemporary Re-signs Poll Winners Barney Kessel and Shelly Manne

Carter & Hines Record 1st LP Together for CR

Jazz giants Benny Carter and Earl Hines, who have been friends the past 30 years, got together for the very first time on record to make Carter's new CR album — *SWINGIN' THE '20s* (M3561, stereo S7561). With the two were Leroy Vinnegar, bass, and Shelly Manne, drums, and the session for them was memorable in that it was the first time either had worked with "Fatha" Hines.

Out of this rare meeting came a totally improvised, spontaneous, swinging album of a dozen favorites of The Twenties, including Hines' original of '28, *A Monday Date*. The others are *Thou Swell*, *My Blue Heaven*, *Just Imagine*, James P. Johnson's *If I Could Be With You*, *Sweet Lorraine*, and

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Ornette Coleman 2nd LP Released

Ornette Coleman now has his second album on CR, *TOMORROW IS THE QUESTION! THE NEW MUSIC OF ORNETTE COLEMAN* (M3569, stereo S7569). With Ornette is his counterpart on trumpet, Don Cherry, plus the rhythm of Shelly Manne, drums, and either Percy Heath or Red Mitchell on bass.

Ornette's first album, *SOMETHING ELSE!!!* (C3551), released just a year ago, "shook up" a great number of critics and musicians. Pro or con the reaction was violent. One critic wrote, "The curious sounds from Coleman's saxophone are not music, as I understand the word." And another,

(continued on page 4)



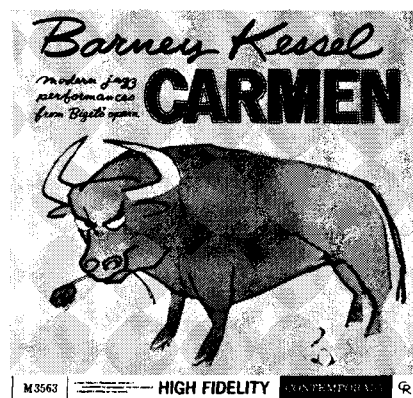
Shelly's most recent release is *SON OF GUNN! SHELLY MANNE & HIS MEN PLAY MORE MUSIC FROM "PETER GUNN"* (M3566, stereo S7566), which features his new front line of Joe Gordon, trumpet, and Richie Kamuca, tenor. As on the first "Gunn," Victor Feldman was added on vibes & marimba. The success of the initial "Gunn" album ensured a second once composer Mancini produced additional music for the TV crime series. (Both Shelly and Victor play the weekly show.)

There are ten tunes on *SON OF GUNN!* including a moody ballad, *Joanna*, which Gordon uses as a muted trumpet solo, an up tempo *My Manne Shelly* written especially for Shelly, and *Blues for Mother's*, a thirty-two bar tune Richie Kamuca blows as a warm tenor solo.

Shelly recorded his first album for CR April, 1953. The album, *SHELLY MANNE & HIS MEN: THE WEST COAST SOUND* (C-3507), which features Art Pepper, Bob Enevoldsen, Jimmy Giuffre, Bud Shank, Marty Paich and several others, is still available.

Since then Shelly & His Men have recorded six more albums presenting in their varied programs

(continued on page 3)



Barney's latest album is "Carmen"—the first jazz performance of an opera. He adapted and arranged nine numbers from Bizet's masterpiece to produce an album that set critics and reviewers to writing such lines as "One of the five finest jazz albums in recent years..." (Stanley Robertson, *L.A. Sentinel*); "Carmen has seldom had it so good..." (Tom Scanlan, *Army Times*); "One of the fine jazz albums of 1959..." (James Scott, *Kansas City Star*); and the counsel to "Run, don't walk, to your nearest record store and latch onto 'Carmen!'" (Micheline Keating, *Tucson Daily Citizen*.)

In recording "Carmen," Barney used Andre Previn, piano; Buddy Collette, flute; Ray Linn, trumpet; Herb Geller, alto; Justin Gordon, tenor; Bill Smith, clarinets; Victor Feldman, vibes; Joe Mondragon, bass; Shelly Manne, drums; and several others.

"This is an album I wish I could devote an entire column to," wrote Robertson in his *L.A. Sentinel* review. "The arrangements and harmonies are a haunting and strange mixture of Moorish influenced sounds of ancient Seville, the funky blues of 'down home' Southern

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Early Duke

GUNTHER SCHULLER

This is the first of a series of articles by Mr. Schuller on the early work of Duke Ellington. The entire series is copyright November 1959 by Rinehart and Company and is reprinted with their permission.

Nearly two decades ago Duke Ellington gave the world of music his masterpiece, **Ko-Ko** and four years later his long-planned "musical history of the Negro," **Black, Brown and Beige**. Despite many and varied efforts on the part of a host of younger musicians, the perfection of the former and the scope and stature of the latter have as yet not been surpassed and only rarely equalled (if at all). It may come as a surprise, then, to realize that practically nothing has been written about Ellington and his works in terms of their musical and stylistic essence, nor about the even more fascinating question of how the leader of a band which, in its earlier days,



Freddy Guy

Bubber Miley

Duke Ellington

Courtesy Roger Pryor Dodge

played primarily show and dance music came to create such compositional landmarks.

The musicologist in jazz, unlike his colleagues in the world of classical music, must of necessity base his analyses primarily on recordings. This has both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it eliminates the vexing problem of interpretation which faces the classical musicologist. Even the most exacting notation—and let it be noted that many composers were (and are) not very exacting, relying rather often upon the tradition and current interpretational styles to complete what they have left unwritten “between the lines”—leaves room for

interpretation and the injection of a performer’s personal feelings and musical attitudes. In a jazz recording, on the other hand, we have a single specific interpretation by the creator **himself**—a frozen image, as it were, of the player’s creative impulse, an image which contains **both** that original impulse **and** its realization. It seems to me that once the artist involved has given his approval to a recording, it must be considered as a valid, analyzable version of his intentions. But this is, on the other hand, precisely the disadvantage—the other side of the coin. For in a music where spontaneity, not only of performance but of **creation**, is such a vital element,

any single performance is apt to give less than the complete picture. Recording conditions being what they are, 1) recorded performances are rarely able to capture the excitement of a live performance, where the vital element of audience reaction plays its important role, and 2) for a variety of reasons countless jazz recordings are made before the performances have jelled into an over-all unified concept, and too many are recorded in a decidedly under-rehearsed state.

In any case, a jazz musicologist has practically no choice. He must turn to recordings, especially in the case of Ellington, where many performances were the result of head arrangements—collective experimentation on the part of Ellington and the whole band—while, in some cases, what scores and parts were eventually copied out have seemingly been lost. And in a band where the personalities of the players contributed so heavily to its sound, its style and quality, even if scores existed, they would tell us very little.

The Ellington discography starts theoretically in 1924,¹ but for all practical purposes, the first more or less presently available recordings² date from April, 1926.³ At that time Ellington had already been leading a number of small groups for some five or six years, first in Washington and later in New York. In the late years of World War I when Washington—Ellington's birthplace—was a beehive of activity, bands providing music for dancing and all manner of social and political functions flourished in great numbers. Ellington, by the time he was seventeen or eighteen, had developed a considerable local reputation as a ragtime and party pianist, and often played with some of the more famous Washington orchestras. I think it is of great importance to any investigation of Ellington's development to note that most, if not all, of these were more or less commercial orchestras—large groups, generally led by well-known ragtime pianists but otherwise consisting primarily of reading or "legitimate"⁴ musicians, since the "best gigs in town" were for society and embassy affairs. However, some of the rougher, smaller outfits undoubtedly played more rags and what was then beginning to be called jazz than waltzes and tangos.

Later in 1922, when Duke and his Washington friends, Otto Hardwick and Sonny Greer, came to New York, it was to play for Wilbur Sweatman, a leader who fronted a large orchestra that played production-type theater dates and acts, although some of the music was categorizable as jazz. And in 1924 Ellington made the first of several financially unsuccessful forays into the world of musical shows, when he wrote the music for an ill-fated show called

"Chocolate Kiddies of 1924." In between, of course, the Washingtonians, as Duke's group called itself, played at jam sessions, house hops, rent parties and an assortment of odd jobs, enough to develop a small repertoire of their own.

Even at its most indigenous, the jazz music that was developing in New York and the whole Northeast was something quite apart from what the more blues-oriented Louisiana (and other Southern) musicians were playing. A functional music, geared specifically to social dancing and theater shows, the Northeastern jazz music, whose inspirational centrum seems to have been Baltimore (with Washington not far behind), revolved primarily around ragtime. Ragtime and the fox trot were the rage of the country, and bands, large or small, tried to embody in orchestral versions at least the spirit, if not actually the style, of the leading ragtime pianists. As late as 1927, when Ellington was still trying to forge an individual style, there exist samples (**Washington Wobble**, for instance) which are fairly literal transcriptions for orchestra of Duke's piano playing. In this they differ drastically from the work of Jelly Roll Morton, for example, whose orchestrations are not mere transpositions of a given set of notes from one instrument to several others, but are true orchestrations, reworked to fit the requirements of orchestral instruments. In Ellington's case, however, this purely transcriptive approach had far-reaching consequences in relation to voicing, about which I shall have more to say later.

In any case, by 1923 Duke's little band had made enough of a reputation to be offered a steady engagement at the Hollywood Club, Forty-ninth and Broadway, soon to be renamed the Kentucky Club. And it was about two and a half years later that Ellington's Washingtonians, as they were still known then, made a number of recordings⁵ which in toto are surely of slight musical significance, but historically quite important.

The earliest of these seem to have been two sides for Gennett. Primarily a "race record" company, Gennett wanted blues, and got **You've Got Those "Wanna Go Back Again" Blues** and **If You Can't Hold the Man You Love**, which strictly speaking, weren't blues at all but fairly catchy blues-ish tunes. The band consisted at the time of Bubber Miley (trumpet), Otto Hardwick (alto and baritone sax), Charlie Irvis (trombone), Sonny Greer (drums), Fred Guy (banjo), Bass Edwards (tuba) and Duke on piano. For the record date Duke enlarged the band to twelve men, adding Jimmy Harrison second trombone and vocal; Don Redman, George Thomas and Prince Robinson (reeds); Leroy Rutledge and Harry Cooper (trumpets), the latter substituting for Miley.

Harrison was just starting his brilliant, short-lived career, while Cooper had played briefly with the Bennie Moten orchestra in Kansas City. Redman, of course, was beginning to exert considerable influence as an arranger. And yet, though studded with these budding names, the two sides are no more than partial attempts at imitating the King Oliver Creole Jazz Band, with which Gennett had had great success a few years earlier and whose playing had been setting styles ever since. **If You Can't Hold the Man You Love**, for example, has a trumpet duet (Ex. 1) in the manner of Oliver and Armstrong, although it lacks their stylistic grace and precision. It also has a similar full-band collective-ensemble sound on the out-chorus—but again, with almost none of the unanimity and continuity of the Creole Band, and with rather less of a beat.



Example 1

If one searches for embryonic Ellingtonian elements, the pickings are very lean indeed, but there is at times the characteristic separation of the reeds and brass which marks the entire early Ellington period. There is also, in **Wanna Go Back Again**, the first of the nostalgic train-whistle imitations which were to creep into Ellington's work from time to time; and there is, in **If You Can't**, a characteristic harmonic progression which—although in this case neither by Ellington nor altogether new—he was to use continuously in ensuing years (Ex. 2). **Wanna** also features Hardwick on baritone and some rather good-natured Irvis trombone, with only a touch of growl (on one note). But on the whole, these initial sides sound more like some of the white bands of the period than the other great Negro bands, such as those of Jelly Roll Morton and King Oliver.



Example 2

Animal Crackers and **Li'l Farina**, recorded two months later, with Miley back and only Charlie Johnson (trumpet) and Prince Robinson (tenor and clarinet) added to the original personnel, already have a shade more distinction, although the tunes themselves are rather undistinguished but typical

music-hall material. While on the one hand these records prove (as many others do), that Duke's piano was at the time a very sloppy, helter-skelter sort of party piano, and that he and certain other members of the band had a tendency to rush tempos, the records also reveal much clearer (possibly better-prepared) ensemble work and, most important of all, a first-rate Miley solo.

Much has been written about Miley's plunger and growl technique. This is understandable, but it has tended to obscure the fact that Miley's solos are often great from the point of view of the **actual notes** played. His solo on **Animal Crackers** is a good example of what I mean. Notice the daring intervals of his opening two measures, and later on in the twenty-fifth bar of his solo the D flat (flatted fifth!) and B flat (minor third against the major third B natural in the accompaniment) (Ex. 3a and 3b). Miley uses the growl or plunger with great restraint in this solo. It is unfortunate that he pushes the tempo too hard, but it does give that part of the performance a kind of headlong, devil-may-care feeling, which, it seems to me, is less annoying than the more characterless remainder of the record. **Animal Crackers**, the less steady of the two records rhythmically—by coincidence both pieces are in the same tempo—fluctuates between dragging (in ensemble passages) and rushing (in solos). It is important to note this because rhythmic unanimity and collective swing were not a strong point of the Ellington organization" until Jimmy Blanton joined the band in 1939.



Example 3a



Example 3b

The next two recorded sides present us for the first time (except for **Li'l Farina**) with Ellington the composer; both tunes are his. **Rainy Nights** has that already-mentioned chord progression in the first three measures (see Ex. 2). It also contains a full chorus each by Irvis and Miley, both of which are

paraphrase improvisations.¹⁰ Irvis' solo is expansive, big-toned, basically simple and at times quite tender. Behind both solos the rhythm section plays chords on the second and fourth beat of each bar, leaving the first and third empty, which gives the whole section a slightly halting, suspended feeling. (Since the playing of the band in those years was more the result of collective thinking than of anything written down, it would be rash simply to ascribe the idea solely to Ellington.) The record ends on a ninth chord, a device that had become "hip" in the middle 1920's, after seventh-chord endings had begun to pale with much overuse.

Choo-Choo, taken as a whole, is the best of these six earliest sides. It is an Ellington tune with a lovely set of chords on which Miley, again sticking close to the melody, fashions a disarmingly simple "paraphrase" solo with little touches here and there of playfulness and nostalgia, and a very discreet use of the plunger and growl (Ex. 4). **Choo-Choo**, as might be expected, ends with the inevitable train whistle, manipulated by Greer.

The musical notation for Example 4 consists of six staves of music. The melody is written in a single line with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The chords are indicated below the staff: A^b7, G7, Coug 7, F, A^b7, G7, Coug 7, F, A, Dm, C7, F, G^b9, F6, E^b+7, Dm7, G7, (E^b C7 Boss), E^b7, D7, C7, A^b7, G7, Coug 7, F7, B^b7, B^b7, A, A, Dm, F6, B^b, D^b7, A^b7, G7, Coug 7. The notation includes various musical symbols such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and rests, with diagonal lines through some stems indicating the use of the growl effect.

Example 4. The Diagonal Lines Through the Stems of Some Notes Indicate the Use of the Growl

Summing up these first recordings, we find rather ordinary material, a modicum of organization, one lovely tune and two fine Miley solos. Although the Ellington historian is apt to look with a kindly eye on these early efforts and find little glimpses of future developments, there is no gainsaying the fact that they cannot stand up in comparison to such contemporary masterpieces of both orchestration and formal structure as Jelly Roll Morton's **Black**

Bottom Stomp or King Oliver's **Froggie Moore**.

Of course Ellington was only twenty-seven, while both Morton and Oliver were just turning forty and in their prime. This accounts, certainly, for part of the difference in quality. But there were also fundamental differences in musical backgrounds, as I've already implied. Some of the older musicians, who were maturing in the early 1920's, verify the impression that the Negro music of the South (from Texas to the Carolinas) was slow in reaching New York, and generally reached it indirectly, via Chicago and St. Louis. Furthermore, there seems to have been a greater effort on the part of Northeastern Negroes to assimilate with the whites, especially in the field of music.

This accounted for the fact, for example, that in the early 1920's there were several large orchestras, like Sweatman's and Sam Wooding's, that played what was then called "symphonic jazz." In an interesting process of cross-fertilization, these orchestras at first tried to emulate the big white organizations (Whiteman, Hickman, etc.); while, in turn, by the middle and late 1920's the big white orchestras reciprocated by trying to capture the more Negroid strain which began to infiltrate the eastern bands with the spread of the New Orleans style (notably through Oliver and Armstrong). Moreover, many colored bands of the time had two kinds of music in their repertoire, one for Harlem (uptown) and another for Broadway (downtown). If a rough generalization can be made, one can say that the New York bands, small and large, were pretty showy, "dicty" outfits that catered primarily to white audiences and were slow in shaking off the ragtime milieu and adopting the New Orleans style.

Ellington was part of this Northeastern tradition, as were the others in his band at that time. It was not until Miley had heard Oliver in Chicago that he began to feature the growl and plunger. Both Irvis and Nanton (who was to replace Irvis in late 1926) learned these same techniques from Miley and a now-forgotten St. Louis trombonist, Jonas Walker, who was probably the first (though not necessarily the best) to apply the New Orleans "freak" sounds to the trombone.

As discussion of succeeding records will show, it was the influence of Miley as the leading soloist of the band¹¹ and as author (or co-author)¹² of many of the Ellington numbers of 1927 to 1929, as well as the influence of the "jungle style" as practiced by Miley and Nanton, that actually brought to full realization the early "Ellington effect."¹³ This quality has too often been credited entirely to Duke. As leader, of course, he had the opportunity to promote or discourage these stylistic developments. It is a

mark of his talent and vision as leader that he let his **musicians** lead the way, until years later, when he had learned to use his remarkable aggregation of sounds on a more purely compositional level. The evidence of the recordings and corroboration by contemporary musicians definitely indicate that Ellington was very dependent upon his players, and that **they** knew it. But the fierce pride and communal attitude within each orchestra—an attitude sorely missing in present day groups—took precedence over individual feelings and jealousies. The over-all collective spirit was based on the premise that what was good for the band as a whole was good for the individual.

On the recordings of late 1926 and early 1927 we hear the fruits of this collective spirit, especially in pieces like **East St. Louis Toodle-00**, **Black and Tan Fantasy** and **Creole Love Call**. In all three Miley was involved to a considerable extent as co-author, and these records bear the stamp of his unique talent more than that of any other member of the band, including Ellington.

As I've already indicated, Miley's importance cannot be fully appreciated solely in terms of his growl and plunger technique. His melodic gift was equally great. One should not even separate the two, because they are inextricably one in concept. As with any great performer or composer, pitch and color derive **simultaneously** from the same initial inspiration. If I separate the two elements in this case, it is only to re-establish the pre-eminence of Miley's melodic gifts. To my knowledge, only Roger Pryor Dodge¹⁴ has tried to show that Miley's importance goes beyond the fashioning of extravagant, bizarre muted effects. His contribution to jazz in the realm of pure classic melody has been unfortunately neglected.

East St. Louis Toodle-00 is a fine example of his great gifts. The melodic line is so disarmingly simple that, except for the use of the mute and growl, it would sound like pure folk song; and it may well be, as Dodge points out, that this thematic material was "common musical knowledge" at the time. It is the way in which this melody is accompanied, however, that for its time adds a striking note to this piece. Underneath the trumpet solo, Ellington (I presume) arranged a moaning, sustained passage for the saxophones and tuba, that provides—whether it is pure jazz or not (see Dodge)—both framework and contrast to Miley's line (Ex. 5).



Example 5

Ellington made many recordings of **East St. Louis Toodle-00** for various record companies, and when compared, these records tell us several interesting facts about the Ellington approach, in as much as they span a period of thirteen months. The Vocalion and Brunswick versions, made four months apart, are practically identical in quality and format. A slightly livelier tempo and the rich tone of Bass Edwards on the earlier recording are the only differences from the better-known Brunswick performance.¹⁵ The Brunswick and Columbia versions were recorded eight days apart, and although not identical, are still very similar in form and musical content. The latter is in general a bit more subdued, mainly because of differences in studio and recording equipment. The tempo is slightly faster on the Brunswick master, and Braud's tuba has less punch than Edwards', on the Columbia version. The solos are virtually the same, so much so that there is even a great similarity between Hardwick's and Jackson's clarinet solos (on Brunswick and Columbia respectively). Nanton's slightly stiff but good-natured solo is, except for minor technicalities, also the same, which indicates that once the "improvisations" were set, they remained unchanged for a certain period. The later Victor version, however, shows some major revisions. The form has changed (Ex. 6), and so have the solos:

Vocalion & Brunswick & Columbia	Intro	A	B	A ¹	B ¹	B ²	A
		32	18	16	18	8 + 10	8
		(Miley)	(Nanton)	(Clar.)	(Brass)	(Reeds-full ensemble)	(Miley)
Victor	Intro	A	B	B ¹	A ¹	B ²	A
		32	18	18	16	18	8
		(Miley)	(Carney)	(Nanton)	(Clar.)	(Brass)	(Miley)

(The small numbers qualifying the letters indicate variations of the material. The other numbers indicate the number of bars.)

Most important of all, the weakest part of the earlier versions, namely the trite polka-like phrase in the reeds, arranged by Ellington (the first part of B²), has been eliminated. This was done by converting the arranged ensemble of B² into a Carney baritone improvisation, inserted between Miley's theme and Nanton's trombone solo to contrast a reed instrument with the two brass. The clarinet solo, which was in the high register in the earlier versions, has become a growly low-register solo. Unfortunately,

though the format is improved, the performance on Victor (except for Miley's) is poorer. The tempo is draggy and slower, the intonation and balance are quite miserable, and Braud's bowed brass is cumbersome and too lugubrious for the occasion. Even Carney, still a bit green (he **was** only seventeen at that time), is excessively reedy in tone, and his loping, on-the-beat rhythm is a little dated. Only Miley survives the changes rather well. He **has** taken some of the humor out of the bridge of his theme (by slurring one phrase formerly tongued), but his final eight bars have become a little more aggressive and dirtier in the use of the growl.

One final point about the form of **East St. Louis Toodle-Oh**. Whereas most bands of the period ended each number with full ensemble (sometimes collectively improvised), Ellington—or Miley—chose to end quietly with a short reprise of the theme, a pattern Ellington was to develop thoroughly in the next decade. This recapitulation really saves **East St. Louis** from complete deterioration after the tawdry ensemble passages. And it seems to me that the importance of this ending lies not so much in the fact that a felicitous choice was made, but that such a choice was **possible**. It was possible because **East St. Louis** was not a collection of thirty-two- or twelve-bar "take your turn" solos, nor was it a totally improvised ensemble piece, but in its faltering way a **composition**; it had a two-part (A and B) form and a thematic statement which made such a recapitulation both logical and pleasing.

Basically the same points could be made about the other two Miley-Ellington masterpieces of the period, **Black and Tan Fantasy** and **Creole Love Call**. The former gives further evidence of the difference in artistic levels at that time between Miley and Ellington. The piece consists of Miley's twelve-bar theme based on the classic blues progression,¹¹ three choruses on the same (two by Miley, one by Nanton), an arranged ensemble passage, a twelve-bar Ellington piano solo, and finally a recapitulation with the famous tagged-on Chopin **Funeral March** ending. Of these segments only two can be attributed to Ellington, and they are not only the weakest by far, but are quite out of character with the rest of the record. Whereas Miley's theme, his solos—and to a lesser degree Nanton's—again reflect an unadorned pure classicism, Ellington's two contributions derive from the world of slick trying-to-be-modern show music.

When I first heard these records in my teens, I recall vaguely feeling a discrepancy between the Ellington and Miley sections, without at the time realizing (or analyzing) the exact nature of this

discrepancy. I always found the arranged ensemble passage (with its characteristic move to G flat major, in the key of B flat the lowered sixth step) slightly cheap and the piano solo boring.¹⁷

Fortunately in **Creole Love Call**—famous for being Adelaide Hall's first attempt at an instrumentalized, wordless vocal—Ellington's role was limited strictly to orchestrating. The melancholy simplicity (again, blues chords) is unadulterated, though the ensemble parts cannot compare with Miley's or Rudy Jackson's radiantly singing New Orleans-styled solos.

A comparison of the three 1927 recordings of **Black and Tan Fantasy** again shows that over a seven-month span the "improvised" solos changed very little. Even when Jabbo Smith substitutes for Miley on the Okeh version, the over-all shape of the trumpet part does not change drastically, though in terms of expression Jabbo's richer sound and looser ways of playing make this performance even more of a fantasy.¹⁸ Miley's solo on the Victor version is, of course, one of his most striking recorded performances. It makes brilliant use of the plunger mute and the growl; but it is, to our ears, thirty-two years later, especially startling in its abundant use of the blue notes, notably the flat fifth in the first bar of the second chorus (Ex. 7). It is also a highly dramatic solo, equal to anything achieved up to that time by the New Orleans trumpet men, and

Example 7

Blue Notes:

a = minor third

b = flat fifth

c = minor seventh

d = minor ninth

e is a bent tone which goes from a flat octave through the minor seventh to the sixth degree, anticipating the return to Bb.

perhaps none of them ever achieved the extraordinary contrast produced by the intense stillness of the four-bar-long high B-flat, suddenly erupting, as if unable to contain itself any longer, into a magnificently structured melodic creation.

Miley's contribution as composer and player in **Black and Tan Fantasy**, **East St. Louis Toodle-Do** and **Creole Love Call** would suffice to place him among the all-time jazz greats. His influence on the emergence of the "Ellington effect," however, was not limited to these particular pieces. He had a hand in the composing of **Blue Bubbles** and **The Blues I Love To Sing** (both 1927); **Black Beauty** (1928); and, in his last year with Duke (1929), **Doin' the Voom Voom** and **Goin' to Town**. Miley also left an indelible stamp on the band's style with great solos on some of the above, as well as on **Jubilee Stomp**, **Yellow Dog Blues**,¹⁹ **Red Hot Band**, the **Mooche**, **Rent Party Blues**, and the earlier **Immigration Blues** and **New Orleans Lowdown**.²⁰ Miley also played hundreds of nightly improvisations at the Cotton Club, forging (with Nanton) the "jungle style" that was the first really distinguishing trademark of the Ellington band.

If Miley was the prime musical inspiration of the early band, Tricky Sam Nanton was its most unique voice. Like Miley, he was a master in the use of the growl, the plunger and wah-wah mutes, and his style had a similar classic simplicity. But where Miley tended to be dapper and smooth, Nanton had a rough-hewn quality in his playing which actually encompassed a wider range of expression. Whether plaintive or humorous, his wah-wah muting often took on a distinctly human quality. His open-horn work also extended from the dark and sober to the jaunty or bucolic. But whatever he was expressing, his distinctive vibrato and big tone gave his playing a kind of bursting-at-the-seams intensity and inner beauty that made every Nanton solo a haunting experience. Melodically or harmonically (it comes to the same thing) Nanton was not as advanced as Miley. But this did not prevent him from creating, over a period of twenty years with Ellington, an endless number of beautiful solos, many of them marked by completely original melodic turns (Ex. 8), all the more unforgettable because of their simplicity. As a matter of fact, Nanton's solo work, in its totality, is unique and perplexing. Here is a player whose solos rarely go much beyond a range of one octave; who has some real limitations instrumentally (compared, for instance, to a virtuoso like Jimmy Harrison); and who, in a sense, plays the same basic idea over and over again—but who, by some magic alchemy, manages to make each solo a new and wondrous experience.



Example 8a. Jubilee Stomp



Example 8b. Yellow Dog Blues



Example 8c. The Blues I Love to Sing

In the period with which we are dealing at the moment (1926-1927), the reedmen did not exert as much influence on the "Ellington effect" as the two brassmen I've discussed. Otto Hardwick, Duke's right-hand man, although a distinctive stylist himself, with an unusual tone and a lithe staccato style, was to influence the Ellington sound not so much directly as **indirectly**, through his influence on Hodges and Carney, which was to be felt a few years later. Rudy Jackson, a fine player in the New Orleans Bechet-influenced tradition, evidently did not find the Ellington approach to his liking. The malleability and growth which Bigard, Jackson's successor in early 1928, had was not in Jackson's make-up, and he left to play with Noble Sissle and other bands.

But this imbalance between reeds and brass was soon to undergo changes. As Duke's band made a success of its historic Cotton Club engagement, it began to expand and attract new players, such as Bigard and Hodges. Soon Whetsol returned (after a leave of absence since 1924), replacing Metcalfe; and in late 1928 the brass were enlarged to four with the addition of Freddy Jenkins. From now on each player was to be chosen by Ellington for some distinctive or unique quality; and it was in 1927 and 1928—his imagination kindled by Miley and Nanton, and encouraged by the band's success—that Ellington began to have visions of future possibilities in composition and tonal color. From now on **his** ideas were to become, in increasing measure, the dominant factor in the development of the orchestra's output.

FOOTNOTES:

1 Benny H. Aasland, *The Wax Works of Duke Ellington*, a discography.

2 *The Birth of Big Band Jazz*—Riverside 12-129.

3 Two old acoustical records, *Trombone Blues* and *I'm Gonna Hang Around My Sugar*, recorded (according to Aasland) in late 1925, are inconsequential items that sound like any number of bands of the period, and certainly not as good as the Fletcher Henderson band of the time, which, of course, had Coleman Hawkins and Louis Armstrong, as well as Don Redman as alto and arranger. Both Ellington sides are typical numbers for dancing, with little "Charleston" touches and a goodly collection of the syncopated clichés of the time. The personnel, I venture to guess, consists of Hardwick on alto, Prince Robinson on clarinet and tenor (he plays what for the time was a fair solo on the second side), Charlie Irvis on trombone, Ellington (piano) and Fred Guy (banjo). The trumpet and tuba are less individual and therefore harder to identify.

4 Barry Ulanov, *Duke Ellington*, pp. 15-17.

5 Although this show never got to Broadway, it enjoyed an extremely successful two-year run in Berlin, played by the Sam Wooding orchestra.

6 On the aforementioned Riverside LP.

7 By 1926 this was a well-established tradition among the orchestras that played the so-called "symphonic jazz." Entire train rides were depicted musically, evidently with considerable realism. Ellington's own efforts in this genre, of course, culminated in the virtuosic 1934 recording of *Daybreak Express*.

8 The A natural in bar two of Miley's solo could have been accidental. It is possible that Miley tried for the sixth of the chord (G) and overshot the mark, since on a trumpet the fingerings for G also give you an A. The history of jazz improvisation on brass instruments is full of such chance moments, often with very fortunate results.

9 One of the most solid players rhythmically in the early Ellington days was Bass Edwards, the tuba player (1926), who had not only a remarkably expressive tone, but a strong pungent beat. Unfortunately he is heard to good advantage only on four or five sides, some of which, like *Immigration Blues* and *The Creeper*, are very hard to obtain.

10 I am using this term in the sense that André Hodeir has applied to it, namely a type of improvisation based primarily on embellishment or ornamentation of the original melodic line.

11 In this connection Ellington's own statement is very telling. "Bubber used to growl all night long, playing gutbucket on his horn. That was when we decided to forget all about the sweet music." (*Hear Me Talkin' to Ya*, Shapiro-Hentoff, p. 231.)

12 The actual extent of Miley's authorship is still a matter for further research; but there seems to be little doubt that the works that bear his name along with Ellington's derive in basic content predominantly from Miley.

13 In the one-year period, November 1926—December 1927, out of a total of seventeen pieces recorded, only four were written by song writers outside the band, and of the remaining thirteen, five were authored by Miley, including the three most important ones of the period. (Six others were by Ellington and two by Hardwick. It may also be that some of the six by Ellington should be attributed to others in the band, because it was a common practice—and still is today—that titular heads of the organization often took full credit for a particular piece.) The "Ellington effect," incidentally, is a very accurate term coined by Billy Strayhorn.

14 *Jazz Monthly* (Volume 4, No. 3), May, 1958; p. 2.

15 At the time Vocalion was a subsidiary of Columbia; and since Columbia re-recorded the Ellington band in *East St. Louis* four months later, I suppose the parent company intended the new version to supersede the earlier one; this would explain why the two Vocalion sides (the first recording of *Birmingham Breakdown* is on the B side) were never reissued. The Vocalion *East St. Louis* version is therefore practically unobtainable.

16 As Roger Pryor Dodge explains, the melody of *Black and Tan Fantasy* is a transmutation of part of a sacred song by Stephen Adams which Bubber's sister used to sing.

17 This is all the more annoying when one realizes that Duke's piano solo is in fact also based on the blues chords, but comes out in his typical stereotyped party-ish stride style.

18 In a still later (1930) recording of *Black and Tan Fantasy*, Cootie Williams also adheres to the original Miley choruses.

19 Miley's solo is based on the verse, rather unusual in those days.

20 *Immigration Blues*, recorded December, 1926, contains one of Miley's very greatest solos. It is unfortunately a very rare collector's item. Miley's chorus is highly imaginative in its simultaneous use of growl and plunger, and is played with a penetrating, nasty tone that almost creates the illusion of speech. *New Orleans Lowdown* is another good Miley record, containing, in fact, two full choruses.

BILL CROW

Introducing Wilbur Ware

Someone told me about Wilbur Ware around 1955 when he was still in Chicago . . . that he was "something else" and shouldn't be missed. When he finally came to New York I was pleased to discover that he was not just another good bass player, but an unusually original artist. After hearing Wilbur several times with Monk, and with his own group at the Bohemia, and upon listening to some of his records, I am convinced that he is one of our truly great jazz musicians. I don't mean that he has invented anything new in the way of lines, forms, or sound, but he has chosen an approach to these elements that does not follow the general evolution of bass style from Blanton through Pettiford, Brown, Heath, Chambers, Mingus, etc. Wilbur uses the same tools that other bassists use, but his concentration is more on percussion, syncopation and bare harmonic roots than on the achievement of a wind-instrument quality in phrasing and melodic invention. His solos are extremely melodic in their own way, logically developed and well balanced, but they are permutations of the primary triad or reshuffling of the root line rather than melodies built from higher notes in the chord. Musical example 1 (from his own Riverside album "The Chicago Sound" [Riverside RLP 12-252] the first of two bass choruses on 31st and State) illustrates his approach well. His entrance to the first bar establishes the tonality in no uncertain terms, and his return to the figure in the second bar sets up the pattern of alternating strong, simple melodic phrases with light, broken figures that indicate the chords and excite the rhythm—a sort of self-accompaniment.

In measures 5, 6, 7, 9 and 11 (don't count the first pickup as a measure), Wilbur often deliberately uses what bass players refer to as a "short sound," that is, he uses rests between consecutive notes of a phrase rather than trying for the legato, "long sound" preferred by most jazz bassists. He uses the long sound when it will enhance his line, but isn't at all one-way about it.

Since the bass is tuned in fourths, this interval and the neighboring fifth are the easiest to finger anywhere on the instrument, and Wilbur makes use of them more frequently than any others. He does it, however, with such imagination that he has developed it into a formal style within which he functions beautifully. He often uses these intervals as double-stops, moving them however the harmony will allow parallel movement, but never allowing himself to be backed into a corner where the continuation of an idea in double-stops would require an

Larry Shustak



Wilbur Ware

impossible fingering. It's also interesting to notice his use of octaves and open string harmonics, as easily-fingered ways to extend the basic chord into different registers of the instrument without running chords and scales.

Ex. 1

Ex. 2

Ex. 3

Because most people who read music are not familiar with the jazz player's habit of mentally re-evaluating notations that do not fit his conception of phrasing, I have written example 1 in 12/8 though the musicians are undoubtedly thinking in terms of four beats to the measure. The usual ways of writing the first measure of example 2 are inaccurate but often written for musicians who understand the liberties that must be taken with phrasing; the more accurate 4/4 rendition using eighth-note triplets (example 3) becomes cluttered with triplet signs, and incorrectly indicates the phrasing to musicians who lay way back on triplets. The disadvantage to 12/8 is the strangeness of using dotted-quarter rests, but it can be read strictly as written and will produce quite an accurate rendition of the original.

On **Decidedly** from the "**Mulligan Meets Monk**" album (Riverside RLP 12-247) there are a number of good illustrations of Wilbur's approach to the bass line. During the opening choruses he builds them principally of roots, fifths and octaves with very little scale walking. After Gerry's breaks he has the harmonic control, since Monk lays out, but rather than immediately walking chords he plays a counter-rhythm on a G harmonic through the first three changes, where G is the fifth of the first chord, the ninth of the second chord and an anticipation of the root that the third chord resolves toward (D7 to G7). Here the pedal device sets off Gerry's melodic idea beautifully and kicks off the chorus with great strength.

On Monk's first chorus of the same tune Wilbur starts with alternating beats of root and fifth that firmly establish the bottom of the chord. At the beginning of the second piano chorus he uses alternating roots and major sevenths (a half step below the root) for the same purpose, then double stopped roots and fifths. His own chorus is walked, first into a rather insecure section of his high register, then abruptly to low open strings and a few double-stopped chromatic fifths. In one spot he shifts from walking on the beat to walking on the upbeat for four bars, and then back again. At the end of his chorus he uses a cycle of fourths for a turn around into the next chorus. As you see, he manages to develop this solo melodically, rhythmically and harmonically without venturing away from the basic form of four quarter-notes to the measure.

On Monk's **Straight, No Chaser** in the same album, his two choruses of blues include rhythmic figures on one note, double stops, syncopated downbeats, melodic quotes and normal trochaic phrases without losing any of the simplicity, space and cleanness of line that mark his work. He was an ideal bassist for Monk, since he seems to share Monk's conception of the value of open space, repeated figures, cycles of intervals, rhythmic tension and relaxation . . . and at the same time he tends to the business of providing

strong roots that give Monk's harmonic conception an added richness.

Besides the variety and color that Wilbur creates in his lines there is the most obvious feature of his playing, a tremendous 4/4 swing that has the same loose, imprecise but very alive feeling of carefree forward motion that you hear in Kenny Clarke's drumming. I can't describe it accurately, but the best image I can think of to suggest it is Cannonball Adderley doing the Lindy. There is flowing movement all through the measure, and not just where the notes are.

On the albums listed above Wilbur is teamed with a number of musicians who represent many styles. The role of the bassist is a little different in each case, depending on how much or how little ground the drummers and piano players like to cover. Without altering his basic approach Wilbur manages to adjust perfectly to each situation, relating as well to Dick Johnson on Riverside RLP 12-252 and Zoot Sims on RLP 12-228 as he does to Ernie Henry on RLP 12-248 and Johnny Griffin on RLP 12-264. He is combined with some excellent pianists (Kenny Drew, Monk, Wynton Kelly, Dave McKenna, Junior Mance) and drummers (Philly Joe, Wilbur Campbell, Shadow Wilson, Osie Johnson.) In the main these albums are good examples of vigorous, swinging rhythm sections, and accurate representation of Wilbur's playing both as accompanist and soloist.

Wilbur is, for me, a reaffirmation of the idea that deep expression can be reached through simplification of form—each new discovery need not always be a more complex one. The difference between the extremely sophisticated simplicity of Wilbur Ware and the primitive simplicity of a beginner is as wide as that between simple drawings by Klee or Miro and those of a child. Artistic curiosity will constantly experiment with mechanical complexity, but it is the resolution of such constructions into simple universal terms that is ultimately satisfying. Wilbur's terms are simple, and his artistic expression most profound.

Test your jazz I.Q.!

In the list of names at the left, locate the one which matches the descriptive phrase on the right. To make things more difficult, there are a couple of extra descriptive phrases which do not apply to any of the names at the left, and a couple which apply to more than one name.

Give yourself five points per correct answer, then check your rating as a critic against this certified chart: 100-95, Critic, Leonard Feather class; 90-95, Critic, **Jazz Monthly** class; 80-90, Critic-with-a-column-and-one-book-published class; 75-80, Critic, **Down Beat** or **The Jazz Review** or **Photoplay** class; 65-75, Critic, **N. Y. Daily News** or **Mademoiselle** class; 45-65, interested onlooker; 25-45, Reads too much and doesn't listen enough; 15-25, listens a lot but to easy things; 10-15, Member of U. S. State Department or a music teacher in a secondary school; 0-10, Go back to your salami-and-egg sandwich.

Ready? Just pick one from column A and one from Column B:

1. John Hammond
2. Art Van Damme
3. Jazz At The Philharmonic
4. RCA Victor
5. Steve Allen
6. Marilyn Moore
7. Bix
8. I Got Rhythm
9. L.A.
10. Steve Allen again
11. The Big Bands
12. G over high C
13. Lud Gluskin
14. Bird's Axe
15. Ornette Coleman
16. The M. J. Q.
17. Porta-Desks
18. Mezz
19. Sophisticated Swing
20. The pre-Bop Era

The House That Jazz Built!

Pioneered jazz-poetry and jazz charades.

Shifted the emphasis off the left foot and onto the ride cymbal.

Based on the changes of **Ja-Da**.

Played Miles' choruses on that **Savoy** session.

America's only true jazz critic this week.

The natural link between Charlie Barnet and Freddie Slack.

Sounds as if he were trying to ingest a vast number of peanut butter sandwiches.

Former Sonny Dunham bandboy who went on to have his own lp.

"Lady, if you can't feel it, then I can't explain it to you, but maybe that fellow over there with the glasses may be able to help you."

"Newport made me!"

Discovered the Ted Heath band.

It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing.

Invented jazz in 1902.

Led his own band at Baylor, but left in his sophomore year when he learned you can get paid for playing hot!

Former **Down Beat** editor who went on to have his own lp.

Still collects Hot.

Bird's Axe.

Barred from Birdland for life.

Couldn't read well enough to stay with the Mound City Blue Blowers, but did anyway.

Natural outgrowth of the blues.

The King Of Swing.

Taught George Avakian how to splice tapes.

Studied counterpoint with Darius Milhaud.

Shifted the emphasis off the ride cymbal and back to the left foot, thereby earning his own lp.

DOM CERULLI

CONVERSATIONS

It has been eighteen years since Henry "Buster" Smith left the New York jazz scene. There was no spectacular reason; he just wanted to go home. Buster was leaving behind a twenty year career in jazz with scarcely a qualm. As he put it, "I'd seen what it was all about, and had my time. I was ready to go home where a little hunting and fishing weren't so hard to find time for."

Buster had become a professional musician in the early twenties playing clarinet with a trio in his home town, Dallas. Leaving Dallas in 1925 with the Blue Devil band led by Ermir Coleman, Buster started a career as arranger, composer, as performer on alto and clarinet, with virtually every important band that played the free-wheeling "Kansas City" style.

With Ernest Williams, Buster led the Blue Devils after Walter Page left to join Bennie Moten. Buster was later in the Moten band himself, as well as a member of the bands of Andy Kirk, Claude Hopkins, Julia Lee and others. In 1935 Buster joined Count Basie in the Reno Club in Kansas City as co-leader of the Basie group.

Buster organized his own band in 1937. Charlie Parker was a member of that band. He had idolized Buster since their first meeting in 1932. The **extent** of Buster's influence on Parker during the latter's formative years in Kansas City can only be guessed at; Buster tells the story of their relationship in Part II of this series.

Since his return to Dallas in 1941, Buster has been relatively obscure, although he has led his own local group most of the time. But his semi-exile was his own choice and he hasn't regretted the choice he made. He is doing well now and still finds time for the fishing he enjoys so much.

The recent recognition of Buster Smith's contribution to jazz has led to the recording of his present group by Gunther Schuller for Atlantic records this past summer.

Don Gazzaway

The following is Buster's own story of his life in jazz as he told it at his house in Dallas, in August, 1959.

WITH BUSTER SMITH

Tell me about your early life and background.

I was born down here in Ellis County—(adjacent to Dallas on the south)—in 1904 on a farm my family was living on and working on. Our family picked cotton. We ran back and forth between the farm and Dallas trying to raise enough money to pay for the home in Dallas we were buying.

What was your first contact with music?

Well, it was on that farm when I was about four or five. I'd come in from the fields and play an old organ.

In a church around there?

No, it was **our** organ— we had one there in the house. Yeah, my brother would get down and push the pedals to make the notes come out, and I was up above playing the keys. My grandfather made us get rid of that old organ because he told my mother, it wouldn't do anything but lead me into the worst of sin. After that I didn't get near another instrument till I was about eighteen. Our family had moved to Celina [near Dallas] at that time—still

picking cotton. I saw a clarinet in a window in town one day and ran all the way back home to ask my mother if I could have it. It didn't cost but \$3.50 so she told me I could buy it if I picked four hundred pounds of cotton a day. Well, I picked **over** four hundred pounds for five days, and then went back and bought that clarinet. I practised around with it for two or three months and was doing pretty good when we moved to Dallas. I quit school when I left Celina. I think I had finished about the seventh grade.

When we moved to Dallas I went to work to help make the living. My mother was alone with us five boys so I had to help bring in a little money—I was the oldest.

Was this when you first ran into professional musicians?

Yeah, there were many, **many** good bands and musicians around here [Dallas] then, and you'd see them everywhere you went. I got to playing around with



a little three piece band—Voddie White. Voddie played piano, I played clarinet, and a drummer—I forget his name. We played around town at a few places and at Saturday night suppers and that sort of thing. That was around 1923 and 1924.

Had you had any formal instruction in music or clarinet?

None whatsoever, I just picked it up little by little by watching people who played that same instrument. I'd just watch them and listen and pick up more and more. I used to hear a boy named Jesse Hooker, an awful good clarinet player who used to play down on the Central track at a place called the Tip-Top Club. He couldn't read either. I'd go down there and listen to him till he moved on. This was in 1922. About that time a little band came up from New Orleans and came in there at the Tip-Top and hired me and another fellow 'cause they were two men short when they got there. Me and the other fellow made five pieces. I played with them for a few weeks until they left and then I gigged around Dallas for a year or so with Voddie White. Then in 1925 the Blue Devils came to town and I joined them.

Were you still playing clarinet then?

Clarinet and alto. I'd picked up the saxophone from our drummer in the Voddie White band. He'd tried to play alto once himself, but he didn't like it so he said, 'Buster, I've got an old alto over at my house you can have if you want it. Take it and go ahead on with it.' So I went and got it out of his closet; it was so old it was turning green. Anyway, I cleaned it up, fooled around and learned it in three days.

Tell me more about the Dallas and Texas scene in those days.

T-Bone Walker was around; he used to dance where I played down on the Central track. He wasn't singing much then—just dancing. Sammy Price was down there too. He was a dancer too at first. Of course there were a lot of bands around here too. Alphonse Trent, Jap Allen, T. Holder, George E. Lee. They all made a circuit around here from Kansas City, Oklahoma City, Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, and a lot of the smaller town too. We had two bands here as good as you could find anywhere—Troy Floyd and Alphonso Trent. In 1926 Trent was playing at the Adolphus hotel. Another band was Fred Cooper's. And then there was Carl Murphy's little seven-piece band; they called themselves the Satisfied Five or something like that when they first started out. They played at the Adolphus Hotel evenings and Trent played there later in the night. Then there were any number of little four and five-piece bands playing around the roadhouses and after hours spots. Trent and Floyd were the big bands and did most of the traveling.

What was the usual instrumentation of these small groups?

They usually start out with piano, drums, and a clarinet. Of course we didn't have a bass player then, but sometimes a bass tuba player. Alphonso Trent finally found a fellow out of Hot Springs or somewhere around there that played string bass and he was the first one I saw till Walter Page came down.

Did you see any of the famous New Orleans musicians around here in those days?

I saw Louis Armstrong once in a great while, and King Oliver too. Oliver was around here more than Louis. He used to come around with some big show. They used to play at the L. B. Mose theatre downtown and the Hummingbird on Hall Street. Those were the big places. That's where Trent and Floyd and all the big shows used to play.

Did they play strictly for Negro audiences?

It was always for colored audiences, although a few roadhouses for whites had colored bands once in a while. They used to play at the Bagdad club in Grand Prairie till the racehorses left and the place folded.

Some say jazz started in many places around the country, rather than in New Orleans alone. What's your feeling about that?

Well, I wouldn't say it started altogether in New Orleans. They had a little different sort of jazz from what we had in Texas—not much difference—the drummer played a little different. We didn't hear as much about New Orleans in those days as we did a little later on.

We called that kind of music gutbucket or barrelhouse. The trumpet players and clarinet players concentrated on that. I'll tell you, a lot of it started around here on those medicine shows.

We used to have them all over town here and that's where it started. A medicine show used to have four or five pieces: trombone, clarinet, trumpet, and a drummer, every man blowing for himself as loud as he could blow to attract a crowd for the 'doctor.' Then there would be a couple of comedians clowning a little bit, then the doc would have the boys blow again to attract another crowd after he'd sold the first crowd. He'd sell them this patent medicine—good for anything—at a dollar or a dollar-fifty a bottle and the comedians would go through the crowd selling it. Then the boys would get up and blow again to attract another bunch of suckers. That's how all that jazz started down in these parts. They tried to get me on one of those things in 1922 but I didn't go. That was when I joined Voddie White, and then did all that business I already told you about until 1925 when Blue Devils came through here and picked me up.



The Original Blue Devils, 1932.

Back Row: Leroy White, trumpet; Theodore 'Doc' Ross, alto; Lester Young, tenor; Buster Smith, alto; Reuben Lynch, guitar; Abe Bolar, bass.
Front Row: Jap Jones, trombone; Leonard Chadwick, trumpet; George Hudson, trumpet; Ernest Williams, vocalist; Charlie Washington, piano; Duie Bess, trombone; Raymond Howell, drums.

Courtesy Frank Driggs

They heard you playing around?

Yeah, the Blue Devils were on tour and were gigging around Dallas at the time. Some of them heard me playing and urged me to join the band. The Devils were being led by a guy named Coleman at the time—Ermir was his first name. Anyway, he was a fine trombone player and everybody called him 'Bucket.' He was from Indianapolis and he came down with a boy that played a whole lot of drums, in fact I never heard anybody that played any more drums than him—a boy called 'Crack'. He was a great drummer, but I can't remember his name—just 'Crack'. They had a great trumpet player named Harry Youngblood. Then after they got down here they made the band up to thirteen pieces. Some of the guys in the band were Ruben Roddy, James Simpson, Harry Youngblood, Willie Lewis, Walter Page, and a little later on Rueben Lynch on banjo. Page was playing string bass with a stick that he bumped the strings with, and he'd pluck the strings too. Of course, he played tuba and a good baritone sax. Everybody thought it was great the way he'd run from one instrument to another. It all looked pretty good to me so I joined up with them.

What sort of deal did they offer you?

Well, we didn't have a salary in those days; we had what we called a 'commonwealth' band. We just split everything down the middle. If we had thirteen men, we'd count out thirteen piles, taking out our expenses first.

We played around Dallas, Houston, Oklahoma City, Kansas City, and those places. In 1927 we saw Basie in Kansas City playing the piano in a show with the Whitman Sisters. There wasn't much happening there so we talked him into coming on down with us. We came on back to Dallas and stayed around here till the last of 1928, went back to Kansas City for about three months, and then we moved back to Oklahoma City and started working at the Ritz ballroom. We used to work there all winter and then go to the Cinderella Garden in Little Rock in the summer. We did that about three or four years—steady work the whole time. We had about eight days off a year. We picked up 'Hot Lips' Page about this time down in Tyler, Texas. He was playing in Sugar Lou's little band down there. I'm the one who stole him from Sugar Lou. He was singing and playing trumpet then.

Lips hadn't been with us long when some of the boys started leaving us to join Bennie Moten. Jimmy Rushing took off first, and then Lips, and then Basie, and Walter Page was the last one to leave about 1931. Things in a band were pretty loose in those days, and Walter didn't think much about leaving what was then his own band. He'd been leading it since the last of 1927. It was on a commonwealth basis and the leader wasn't much more than just one of the boys, so he left.

After they left, Ernest Williams and myself, being the oldest men in the band, took over and carried it all over into Virginia and around, and kept it together. Ernest was our drummer, he replaced 'Crack' when he left. Ernest and I got to be real good friends. We saw the band dwindle down several times to five or six pieces and we'd have to build it back up again. We kept that up about three years.

We went all over Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, and all around the middle part of the country. In fact we went clear up to Minnesota one time and that's when we first heard Lester Young.

Was this after you and Ernest Williams took over the Blue Devils?

Well, no, actually this was in 1930 before Walter left the band. We had got a trumpet player out of Des Moines named Leroy White—called him 'Snake' White. (He's out in California now, arranging and doing well, I hear.) He was the one that told us about Lester Young in Minneapolis. We had a date up there so when we got there we went over to hear him.

We liked him so well we stole him a few days later from the band he was in—Frank Hine's band.

He was playing tenor and baritone then; in fact he played so much baritone that Walter Page lay **his** baritone down and said he wasn't going to play it anymore.

Lester joined us then and Walter left just a little later and Ernest Williams and I took over. Lester was with us all the time till we broke up the band in 1933.

What caused the break-up of the Blue Devils?

Well, we were on tour and landed in Newport News, Virginia. I guess it was the wrong time of year or something, and we were in a little speakeasy joint, and we couldn't do any good in a place like that. The band was still on a commonwealth basis and we couldn't go anywhere or accept a job unless we had a vote on it. And nearly always, seven of the boys would pull one way and five or six would pull the other way, and we would end up doing nothing and staying where we were. We missed our best opportunity around that time when Fats Waller wanted us to work for him. We were in Cincinnati and Waller wanted us to play for him on WLW in Cincinnati. He offered us eight hundred dollars to play for him on an hour and a half show and some of the boys thought it wasn't enough. So we didn't get that job, but went on back to Newport News and started to play around there to get enough money to come back West.

We were playing in a town called Martinsville where a guy named Dr. Baldwin had a combination store there with a dance hall. He hired us and we stayed

there a few weeks. We didn't like it but we were broke and couldn't leave.

Then a guy from Beckly, West Virginia came over and told us he had a steady job over there at a white night club. We went on over and played about three nights and found out he had us working on a percentage. He had quoted us a straight price for the job and then turned around and took a big cut out of our salary for himself. We were pretty mad but we couldn't do anything about it because the guy wasn't twenty-one.

Now we had a couple of taxi drivers to carry us over there to the joint every night and they were waiting till the end of the week to collect their money—about seventy dollars. Well, about that time Zack White came down from Cincinnati and tried to steal some of our boys, but we told him he'd have to take **all** of us, or nobody would go. The taxi-drivers found out that two or three boys were going to sneak off anyway so the drivers went up to the police and had our instruments attached so we wouldn't get away without paying all that cab fare.

So we had to stay there. The hotel man at our hotel heard about it too and **he** put us out of the hotel—so there we were. We stayed on three or four nights and the law would come down where we were playing and bring us our instruments. We would play and then put them back in their cases and the police carried them right on back and put them in jail. We had about thirteen or fourteen pieces in the band.

After that we decided to get away from there. So we decided to hobo away from there, go somewhere and rent some instruments till we could get enough money to send back and get our instruments and pay off the money which amounted to about two hundred dollars by then. Well we hoboed all the way to St. Louis and stayed around there two or three days and saw nothing was happening. Somebody stole half my book there though; sure did burn me up.

Bennie Moten heard about us being over there and sent a car over to pick some of us up. Some of the boys hoboed on home and some of them sent for money and then went on home—rode the train **right**. So four of us went on to Kansas City with Bennie's car and joined his band in the last of 1933. Those four were Lester Young, Theodore Ross, Jap Jones, and myself. Moten was gigging around Kansas City. Jimmy Rushing, Basie, "Lips", and Walter Page were still with Moten then. They'd been with him since they left the Blue Devils.

[This is the first of a series of articles about Buster Smith.]

RISIN' HIGH WATER BLUES

Back water risin',
Southern people can't make no sign.
I say back water risin',
Southern people can't make no sign.
And I can't get no hearin'
From that Memphis girl of mine.
Water in Arkansas
People screamin' in Tennessee.
Ooooo,
People screamin' in Tennessee.
About the only Memphis,
Back water been over all poor me.
People say it's rainin'
And it has been for nineteen days.
People say it's rainin'
And it has been for nineteen days.
Thousand people stands only here
Lookin' down where they used to stay.
Children start screamin'
Mama we ain't got no home.
Ooooo,
Mama we ain't go no home.
Papa says to children,
"Back water left us all alone."
Back water risin',
Comin' to my window and door.
Back water risin',
Comin' to my window and door.
I live with the pain in my heart,
Back water will rise no more.

(By Blind Lemon Jefferson on Paramount
12487. Transcribed by Jacques Demêtre.)

THE BLUES

DROP DOWN, MAMA

Drop down, babe, and let your dad have peace,
I know just what you're tryin' to put on me.
Well, mama don't 'llow me to fool 'round all night long,
I may look like I'm crazy, but I do know right from wrong.
Get away from my window, quit scratchin' on my screen,
You's a dirty mistreater, I know just what you mean.
Mama don't 'llow me to fool 'round all night long,
I may look like I'm crazy, but I do know right from wrong.
Some of these women sure do make me tired,
Got a hand full of "Gimme" an' a mouthful of "Much obliged."
Well, mama don't 'llow me to fool 'round all night long,
I may look like I'm crazy, but I do know right from wrong.

(Sung by Sleepy Estes on Champion 50048.
Transcribed by Max Harrison.)

DARK NIGHT BLUES

I've got the dark night blues, I'm feeling awful bad,
Got th' dark night blues, mama, 'n' feeling awful bad,
That's the worst old feeling a good man has ever had.
I followed my brown from the depot to the train,
I followed my sweet brown from the depot to the train,
And the blues came down, like dark night showers of rain.
I drink so much whiskey I stagger when I'm 'sleep,
Drink so much whiskey, I stagger when I'm 'sleep,
My brains is dark and cloudy, my mind's gone to my feet.
I got the blues so bad I can feel them in the dark,
I got the blues so bad I can feel them in the dark,
That one dark and dreary morning, baby when you broke my heart.
Got a fair brown in Atlanta, got one in Macon too;
Got a fair brown in Atlanta, got one in Macon too;
I got me one in Swainsboro, gimme them ol' dark night blues.
Everything I told you, you went an' told your outside man,
Everything I told you mama, you went and told your outside man,
But I'm gonna tell you something your good man can't stand.
Ridin' the Beale Street Special, mama 'n' I'm leavin' this town,
Ridin' the Beale Street Special, baby an' I'm leavin' this town,
Say you didn't want me, I'm gonna quit hangin' around.

(By Blind Willie McTell. Victor V-38032-A.
Transcribed by Tony Standish.)

RECORD REVIEWS

"BIX BEIDERBECKE and the Wolverines." **Riverside RLP 12-123.** Bix Beiderbecke, trumpet (piano on *Big Boy* only); Jimmy Hartwell, clarinet; George Johnson, tenor; Dick Voynow, piano; Bob Gillette, banjo and guitar; Min Leibbrook, tuba; Vic Moore, drums. *Oh, Baby*; Copenhagen; *Riverboat Shuffle*; *Susie*; *Royal Garden Blues*; *Tiger Rag*; *Tia Juana*; *Big Boy*. With George Brunis, trombone added. *Sensation Rag*; *Lazy Daddy*. With Al Gande replacing Brunis. *Fidgety Feet*; *Jazz Me Blues*. Riverside has again made available, this time on a single twelve-inch lp, almost the entire recorded output of the Wolverine orchestra (one tune, *I Need Some Petting*, is not included), a group whose finest hours were in 1924, the year of these sides, and which is interesting today almost solely because of Bix Beiderbecke. Almost all of Beiderbecke's records are plagued by inadequate sidemen. Depending on how you take these things, the men here may annoy you, or you may be able to function as a listener in spite of them. As a group the Wolverines were far from matching the rhythmic ease that the Oliver band, say, achieved at its best, but neither were they as bad as many other groups. Some momentum is generated on the medium tempo tracks (nothing is taken slow); surprisingly, a lot of it is generated by the banjoist, Bob Gillette, who in spite of corny rolls, is very steady, and occasionally gets a fine sprung-rhythm effect. The tunes are dixieland standards, some of them new at that time, arranged with some care, and with rather more solo work than

apparently was common in 1924. Only Beiderbecke provokes any interest as a soloist—or as a part in the ensemble passages, for that matter. Bix himself was one of the four or five best cornetists or trumpeters to be recorded during the twenties, and the first white soloist we know of whose playing can be compared in quality to that of his best Negro contemporaries. He was one of the first men to develop, at least on record, a truly solo, as opposed to ensemble, concept for a horn; he was second only to Louis in the extent and quality of his contributions to solo trumpet playing before 1930. These contributions were harmonic and melodic, rather than rhythmic. Bix's time was based on the white dixieland style; his rhythmic displacements were usually crude syncopations next to those of the most advanced Negro players of the twenties like Louis, Earl Hines and Jimmy Harrison. His time was excellent in one lesser sense, however; although he didn't conceive very sophisticated patterns, he managed to play the ones he did conceive absolutely perfectly. Not a note was ever misplaced to the slightest degree. I think it's this control, this, in the broad sense, technical brilliance which accounts for so much of the beauty of his playing. His tone was round and golden, with a fragile vibrato in all registers; each note, because of its attack and tone, was beautiful in itself; how it functioned in relation to the notes preceding and following it seems almost a secondary matter in Bix's case. There's a tremendous kick in listening to him skip a large interval flawlessly at a fast tempo, or make a subtle, lacy thing out of a dixieland tune like *Sensation Rag* just through the delicacy of his slight variations and the perfection of his control, a control perhaps no greater than Louis', but more instantly striking. Actually, their success in broadening the melodic and formal equipment of the soloist was just about the only thing Bix and Louis had in common; in other respects—time, tone, melodic concept—they were about as far apart as contemporary trumpeters could be. Louis' phrasing was based largely on that of King Oliver, with the addition of grace and passing notes and short ornamental runs—full of hesitations, and saturated, even at fast tempos, with blues phrasing and inflections. When Louis was making something, he let you know it. There were the careful silences, then the exultant triumph of a note reached or a beautiful phrase executed. Bix, on the other hand, made everything with the same smooth, unhurried aplomb. Having developed the tone he apparently wanted, he never altered it to suit the moment; his tone was invariably beautiful, but it was not, as Louis' was, an expressive tool. Bix also lacked the blues, the primary element in Oliver's playing and only slightly less important in Louis'. This

put him in the company of many northern and eastern players who sound hopelessly rickytick and trivial today; one of the most remarkable things about Bix was that he managed to play fine, lasting things without once drawing on the soulful southern tradition which ended up being the mainstream of that time. These are Beiderbecke's earliest records. He was only twenty-one when he recorded them. But although they don't include his most ambitious solo work, they show a style which was already more than mature: it was radically advanced. The set is indispensable to anyone interested either in the development of early jazz or in the cornet (or trumpet, with its very similar problems and potential) as an instrument. **Mait Edey**

CLIFFORD BROWN-MAX ROACH: "In Concert." Gene Norman GN LP18. Clifford Brown, trumpet; Teddy Edwards, tenor; Carl Perkins, piano; George Bledsoe, bass; Max Roach, drums. *Tenderly*; *Sunset Eyes*; *Clifford's Axe*; All God's Chillun Got Rhythm. Brown; Roach; Harold Land, tenor; Richie Powell, piano; George Morrow, bass. *Jordu*; I Get a Kick out of You; *Parisian Thoroughfare*; I Can't Get Started (omit Land). **CLIFFORD BROWN-MAX ROACH.** Emarcy MG 36036. Brown, trumpet; Land, tenor; Powell, piano; Morrow, bass; Roach, drums. *Delilah*; *Jordu*; *Joy Springs*; *Parisian Thoroughfare*; *The Blues Walk*; *Daahoud*; *What Am I Here For?* **CLIFFORD BROWN-MAX ROACH:** "Study in Brown". Emarcy MG 36037. Same personnel. *Cherokee*; *Jacqui*; *Swingin'*; *Lands End*; *George's Dilemma*; *Sandu*; *Gerkin for Perkin*; *If I Ever Love Again*; *Take the 'A' Train*. **CLIFFORD BROWN-MAX ROACH:** "At Basin Street." Emarcy MG 36070. Sonny Rollins, tenor replaces Land. *What Is This Thing Called Love?*; *Love Is a Many Splendoured Thing*; *I'll Remember April*; *Powell's Prances*; *Time*; *The Scene Is Clean*; *Gertrude's Bounce*. **"SONNY ROLLINS + 4."** Prestige 7038. Same personnel. *Valse Hot*; *Kiss and Run*; *I Feel a Song Comin' On*; *Count Your Blessings*; *Pent-Up House*. These albums can be viewed in several ways. They are important ones in the careers of three of the most influential jazzmen of the decade—Brown, Roach, Rollins—and they chart the progress of one of the most celebrated and typical groups of its time. It is necessary to recall how the jazz scene changed in the two years that separate these sessions. In 1954, terms like 'funky,' 'hard-bop,' and 'mainstream' were still lurking in the vaults of the Institute of Jazz Semantics, or wherever it is they are bred. Thelonious Monk wasn't winning any polls. This was the twilight of the cool era. Along with Blakey, Silver Monk, et al, the musicians on these recordings deserve

the credit for much of what has happened since.

The Gene Norman lp includes material from two Los Angeles concerts.

Tenderly, **Sunset Eyes**, **Clifford's Axe** and **All God's Chillun' Got Rhythm** were made in April 1954 with the earliest Brown-Roach quintet. Although the men had been together only a short time, there were already some pre-set routines: the catchy secondary theme on **Sunset**, the interplay of the horns on **Chillun'** and, most significant, the integration of Roach's drum accents with the theme statements. Clifford Brown was the featured soloist, of course, and he had **Tenderly** and **Clifford's Axe** to himself. The former is one of his finest ballads on record, played with more force and sense of direction than he often had at this tempo. He builds to an impressive climax where, unfortunately, he fluffs the crucial high note; he recovers quickly and almost gets away with it. **Clifford's Axe**, on the chords of **The Man I Love**, is a medium-tempo bounce all the way through, with Brownie light-hearted and at ease, if not quite showing the technical assurance of his very best work. Roach's continual snare accents provide 'cushioning' behind the trumpet, an effect that becomes even more pronounced in the second concert. The other sides include some rough-toned, charging tenor from Teddy Edwards, a West Coast veteran, and some sub-standard work from Perkins, sounding incredibly like a bad Red Garland at times. Brown copes well with the frantic tempo of **Chillun'**, eschewing clever flourishes in favor of skilful, varied and imaginative improvising. **Sunset Eyes**, a good theme by Edwards, has an Afro-Cuban rhythm for its main-eight, which is adhered to for the solos. Both horns treat the rhythmic contrast between the A and B sections of the tune with great sensitivity.

For the later concert in August, the unit that stayed intact for over a year was heard. It had recorded the titles on MG30636 earlier in the month. By now Clifford Brown had developed into a distinctive jazz stylist, and the group's musical policy was taking shape. The arrangements were seldom more than frameworks for a string of solos, but they did contain the intriguing relationship between the drums and the front line. On most numbers the melody was re-phrased into rhythmic patterns, strongly emphasized by Roach behind the horns, in the now familiar hard bop manner. There is no doubt that these sides contain Brownie's best recorded work to that date. **I Get A Kick Out Of You** is taken much too fast, but he still manages to vary his phrasing, avoid clichés and bring off all the runs and most of the high notes. **Jordu** and **Parisian Thoroughfare** have some superb trumpet: warm, lyrical, relaxed and always imaginative. His phrasing is loose and supple, cutting across

bar lines and flowing over and around the beat, while the solos are carefully-constructed, both in linear contrast and use of dynamics. He always did have the ability to piece related ideas together to form a continuous line, or to mould short phrases into a symmetrical design, but he had not always imposed the feeling of overall structural unity that he did here. It is also very noticeable that the genuine melodic strength of his lines is founded upon a rhythmic flexibility that is rare in a trumpeter. He reminds one especially of Bud Powell in his pace-setting days—rather than of Monk, Davis, Rollins or, for that matter, Armstrong—in that the rhythmic intricacy arises directly from the way the notes are placed or accented within a single phrase. Hear the bridge of his second chorus on **Jordu**, for example. Given the appropriate technical command, he can be said to have based his style on this melodic-accentual virtuosity. One does not expect from him the tremendous power, nor the numerous tonal inflections, of the older trumpeters, although the control that he exercises over his tone would become, from this point on, quite exemplary. On the last number, **I Can't Get Started**, he ignores all the rules for playing ballads, breaking into typically involved runs and splitting some high notes at the end in a humorous fashion.

Land and Powell add little apart from Land's forthright solo on **Thoroughfare**. Roach provides that rocking snare accompaniment on **Jordu** and **Thoroughfare** mentioned earlier, which was much criticised when the records first came out. Today it sounds exactly right, one of the logical extensions of modern drumming, and obviously a contributing factor to the excellence of Brownie's performance: Both these concerts have the virtues of in-person recordings without the snags: plenty of drive and guts and no honking and screaming. The numbers on MG30636 are more subdued, as can quickly be gathered from a comparison of **Jordu** and **Thoroughfare** with the concert versions. Brown himself plays very well throughout, particularly on **Delilah** and **Joy Spring**. He was undoubtedly giving the closest attention to the structure of his solos at this time, and this may account for the sober nature of his work here, and as a result his tone was becoming rounder and deeper. The fanciful flights that one associates with him are largely absent, and there is a corresponding emphasis on the tender, romantic playing. The logic of his improvisations on this lp is indeed impressive, but no more so than on the concert sides, while some of the feeling of spontaneity and carefree exuberance is missing. Perhaps the prevailing West Coast atmosphere had crept into the studio—there is an absurdly reverent treatment of that masterpiece of kitsch—**Delilah**, and all




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through there seems to be an unnatural concern to be "polished." However every track has worthwhile moments, with Land and Powell in better form than on GN 18. The first eight bars of Clifford's second chorus on **Thoroughfare** illustrate admirably how he can change rhythmic emphasis within a long, unbroken phrase. Also note Roach's fourth-beat accents behind Land on **Delilah**, a very common device today.

"**A Study In Brown**" was recorded in February 1955. By now the group was established, its library was growing, and one could have expected some great music. However the restraint, which was discernible on the release discussed above, is all over this lp. Since it is inconceivable that they never played like this in a club, one can only divide the blame between the musicians and the recording officials. The one exceptional track, the moody **George's Dilemma**, happens to require a reticent approach. This piece is similar to **Sunset Eyes**, and the way Brownie switches from the relaxed 4/4 middle-eights to the sombre Afro sections is really striking. **Sandu**, a medium-tempo blues, is also successful, with two effortless choruses from Clifford in his most lyrical manner, followed by some gutty tenor. Otherwise, it is rather a listless lp. **Cherokee** has a dull trumpet solo, mostly flitting about in the lower register with little melodic brilliance, and on Richie Powell's attractive **Jacqui**, Brownie starts beautifully and then fails completely to build on the elegiac mood he has set. Land and Powell play better than on the previous records, but their talents were not yet sufficiently developed to really impress. Roach and Morrow are a swinging and versatile team, but this date needed someone like Blakey to wake everybody up. Among the disquieting features of the album were the corny effects on some of the titles: **Take The A Train** included train noises, **Cherokee** had Western sound track music for its introduction, and even the theme of **George's Dilemma**, which tottered near the brink of disaster, finally made it with a genuine Xavier Cugat coda. The notes 'credit' Richie Powell with the train effects, so perhaps he can be accused of all similar aberrations, including those on **Delilah**. His arrangement of **Jacqui** is a good one, however, and it presages better things to come. The last two albums were recorded a year later, shortly after Sonny Rollins had joined the group. It is unfortunate that the unit was not more fully documented on record during 1955, but it is safe to say that Rollins made as much difference to its musical outlook as a comparison of these lps with "**A Study In Brown**" would indicate. Rollins is now familiar to us as a musician who combines a rigid mental discipline in improvising with a relentless, often overpowering, thirst for musical freedom. The formal

strength of his solos is not the result of 'playing safe', but is achieved, in part, through the systematic use of the most unorthodox material. Not only is he difficult to accompany, he actually thrives on accompanists whose aggressive personalities equal his own. This quality makes his work with a small group exhilarating. His recent insistence on a pianoless rhythm section, which leaves him the maximum freedom his ultimate desire is the mastery of unaccompanied tenor, should not obscure the fact that he has proven, as these two records, particularly the Prestige, and his astonishing Blue Note with J. J. and Blakey reveal, a leading theorist of contemporary small-band style.

For the Emarcy record Powell wrote the originals and arranged all titles except Tadd Dameron's **Scene Is Clean**, which Dameron arranged and conducted. The Prestige has **I Feel A Song Comin' On**, **Count Your Blessings**, **Kiss And Run** and two Rollins tunes—**Pent-Up House** and **Valse Hot**. The music on these sides is really alive; the musicians play for, and against, each other in a way that at once affirms and expands the heritage of Parker and Gillespie. The riotous **Feel A Song** is the clearest example. The heavily-accented introduction serves as a counter-melody to Brownie's theme statement; then Rollins takes the bridge in a similar vein, parodying the original melody with single staccato notes punctuated by the drums; then back again, with Rollins moaning behind the trumpet. Except during the trumpet-tenor chase towards the end, the first half of the main phrase has staccato interpolations from Roach throughout, giving the vital sense of unity to a memorable example of re-composition. At this racing tempo, the solos are no more than good, but the whole is immeasurably greater than the sum of its components: a bitingly-clear illustration of the dramatic power that a small group can achieve within the bop tradition.

Many of the sides show Clifford Brown at his best. While it would be wrong to attribute final maturity to him at the age of twenty-five, his style here is mature in all essentials. He was not simply a fine trumpet in the modern idiom, but an important and original exponent of jazz trumpet, irrespective of periods. His conception of the purely melodic use of his instrument is, in certain respects, the most radically uncompromising we have yet seen, with his stream of attractive and personal ideas, so skillfully phrased. On **Scene** and **Pent-Up** he is at his gayest and most lyrical; one can only admire those long, singing lines, and the **insouciance** bubbling out of his cutting tone. On **What Is This Thing**, the structure of his solo, as well as the more expected careful development of the individual ideas, proves he could almost beat Rollins at his own game. His choruses here, have all the drive and urgency

that was missing from the **Cherokee** of a year earlier. He does not play quite as impressively on **Many Splendored** or **April**, sounding mechanical at times and also showing a greater dependence on the changes than Rollins. He is obviously more at ease with the less hackneyed material of **Kiss** and, especially, **Gertrude's Bounce**. His solo on the latter commences with an eight-bar phrase of an internal complexity that recalls Parker or Powell, and continues in this way—so very different from the normal "running style" trumpet, which is rhythmically and melodically more straightforward. Brownie's command of legato runs sets him apart from the rest, enables him to twist his phrases with such adroitness.

Sonny Rollins was up to his own high standard of those days, though his approach is not as daring, or as intransigent, as it has become. All his trademarks crop up: the ingenious formal structure (**What Is This Thing** and **Pent-Up**), the passionate attack (**Scene Is Clean**—an illuminating contrast with the trumpet chorus—and his feature, **Blessings**), the raucous and sardonic humor (the anarchic middle-eights on **What Is This Thing**, **April** and the afore-mentioned **I Feel A Song**). His solo on **April** is perhaps the most noteworthy. He startles one by playing his first chorus in quarter-notes, instead of the almost obligatory eighth-notes, gradually increasing the momentum until, after the drum solo, he unleashes his full force in the chase, where poor Brownie can hardly get a word in. Both horns sail into Sonny's **Valse Hot**: Rollins jerky, bellowing, distorting the pulse at every opportunity; Brownie calm and flowing, as if he had been waltzing all his life. The rhythm section now functioned perfectly, Morrow as the anchor-man, Roach prodding the front line with his springing cymbal beat and apt interpolations. His solos are always beautifully played and constructed, if not as rhythmically adventurous as those of Art Blakey; the one on **Valse Hot** is a special witness to his great artistry. Apart from some nice figures behind Rollins on **Pent-Up** the piano has a very subordinated role, but this is perhaps the place to mention Richie Powell. His solos have interesting moments that suggest his own style was growing, and **What Is This Thing** and **Pent-Up** indicate that he was aware of the problems of form that were concerning Rollins. His talents as a composer-arranger are self-evident. **Jacqui**, **Powell's Prances** and **Gertrude's Bounce** are good themes; **Time** is an effective mood study and his arrangement of **What Is This Thing** is more than competent. If he had anything to do with the arrangements on the Prestige album, even more to his credit. These records are as worthy a memorial to him as they are to an outstanding and ingratiating young trumpeter.

Ronald Atkins

BENNY CARTER: "Jazz Giant."**Contemporary C 3555.**

Benny Carter, alto, trumpet; Ben Webster, tenor; Frank Rosolino, trombone; Jimmy Rowles, piano; Barney Kessel, guitar; Leroy Vinnegar, bass; Shelly Manne, drums. *I'm Coming Virginia*; *A Walkin' Thing*. Andre Previn, piano for Rowles.

Old Fashioned Love; *Blue Lou*; *How Can You Lose?*

Carter, Previn, Kessel, Vinnegar, Manne.

Ain't She Sweet; *Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gives to Me*.

Here is Carter playing alto and trumpet (on two tunes) with Ben Webster and members of the Contemporary house band: Frank Rosolino, Shelley Manne, Leroy Vinnegar, Barney Kessel and André Previn. I think the myth of the old-timer who is really just as good, if not better than any of these young upstarts, has been run into the ground lately, although it has a kind of dialectical appeal which is hard to resist; and after hearing the first side I was tempted to assume the role of giant killer. However, the rest of the record redeems the mess made of *Old Fashioned Love*, with frivolous Rosolino and corny Previn, and *I'm Coming Virginia*, a formal étude of trumpet crescendo-dimuyendo by Carter. Benny solos wonderfully on *Ain't She Sweet* and *Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gives to Me*. One particularly appreciates the fact that a second and third listening reveal melodic subtleties not audible at first. His tone is not so lush here as it sometimes has been, and he sounds just a little forced in the upper octave. Nevertheless, these are only quibbles in view of the general run of alto playing. Ben Webster is not at his best, and even seems to have trouble with the changes of *Blue Lou*. Rosolino whoops it up and, when the impression of plain bad taste does not predominate, plays attractively. Possibly Previn was not the best choice for the rhythm section; his relentlessly brittle style seems out of place in this mellow atmosphere.

An uneven record, perhaps, but certainly enjoyable. Those distressed by the supercharged, if not agonized school of alto playing should certainly give some attention to this release.

Larry Gushee

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MILES DAVIS: "Ascenseur pour l'échafaud". Fontant 660.213 MR (10" LP).

Miles Davis, trumpet; Barney Wilen, tenor; Rene Urtreger, piano; Pierre Michelot, bass; Kenny Clarke, drums.

Generique; *L'assassinat de Carala*; *Sur l'autoroute*; *Julien dans l'ascenseur*; *Florence sur les Champs-Elysees*; *Diner au motel*; *Evasion de Julien*; *Visite du vigile*; *Au bar du petit Bac*; *Chez le photographe du motel*. This is Miles Davis' complete score for "Elevator To The Gallows," a French suspense movie concerning a "per-

fect" murder and a car theft, among other things. Recorded in France, it was awarded the 1957 Louis Delluc prize for the best film score and the 1958 Grand Prix du Disque for the best recording. I don't know why it took so long to get over here, but it was worth waiting for.

It is a very spare, typically Miles Davis score, unlike any other jazz score ever used in a movie, and there are none of the usual clichés and Hollywoodish theatrical effects—Miles just does not think in those terms; he thinks in terms of Miles Davis and group. As a result, some of the things here are going to startle a lot of people, even some of his closest followers. For example, take the murder scene (track 2). The accompanying music consists only of a walking bass line. But who could ever have dreamed that a walking bass line could sound like this? It is powerful and inexorable, unbelievably sinister. One imagines terrifying things that go on. The same thing happens in tracks 7 and 8 (in the movie, Julien, trapped in the elevator, manages to escape and, not a moment too soon, he disappears into his cell just as the warden, who has momentarily left his post, returns). Towards the end of track 8 the suspense is heightened all the more as Kenny Clarke's drums join the bass. Nail-biting, breath-holding, edge-of-your-seat stuff.

An undercurrent of suspense and mystery runs throughout the album. There is one section, which returns several times in various guises, very reminiscent of the classic Miles-Coltrane interpretation of *Dear Old Stockholm*. It has the plaintive quality characteristic of Miles in one of his blue moments, but one senses something else in it. The two up-tempo tracks—*Sur l'autoroute* and *Diner au Motel* (the latter blues in B-flat) convey a sense of urgency, an unmistakable feeling that something is going to happen. A lot of Hollywood composers could benefit from listening to this score and seeing how Miles achieves the desired effect through simplicity.

Miles, to put it in a word, cooks. Playing muted most of the time, he blows with his customary drive and sensitiveness. His solos are, as usual, beautifully constructed and compelling. An unusual thing, incidentally, occurs on track 6—according to the liner notes, suddenly a piece of skin from his lip got caught in the mouthpiece, resulting in a very unusual sound that is, to me, like a different kind of mute. As for the rest of the group: Barney Wilen, an exciting Hank Mobley-Sonny Rollins-John Coltrane tenor man, does some nice things in his solos. The rhythm section is very good, and bassist Michelot is a genuine surprise—if I didn't know who it was I'd swear it was Wilbur Ware! He has the same big sound, the same accurate intonation, and the same way of playing bass lines.

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Zita Carno

KENNY DORHAM: "Round about Midnight at the Cafe Bohemia." Blue Note LP 1524.

Kenny Dorham, trumpet; J. R. Monterose, tenor; Kenny Burrell, guitar; Bobby Timmons, piano; Sam Jones, bass; Arthur Edgehill, drums. *Monaco*; Mexico City; *A Night in Tunisia*; Hill's Edge.

Omit Burrell, *'Round About Midnight*; Omit Burrell and Monterose, *Autumn in New York*. Dorham's musical language never had the idiomatic tang that makes the work of Gillespie, Navarro or Davis so recognizable; yet at times he has recorded solo passages of superb delineation that compare favorably with the most notable achievements of his contemporaries. On the Rollins Quintet date held on August 18, 1954 (Prestige 7058) he was in extraordinarily inspired form. *Solid*, the medium-tempo blues, contains one of the finest jazz trumpet solos of the decade. There is probably no one explanation why such moments occur in the work of a musician who does not otherwise stand out as a major figure of his generation; but it is a fair guess that their comparative rarity stems from Dorham's attitude to his music. The almost impossibly beautiful blend of poise and incisiveness that stamps his finest work must be very elusive even for so skilled a performer. Jazz has seldom been kind to the idealist. It is all too rarely acknowledged that the wonderful series of records Armstrong made in the late 'twenties abound in technical flaws that would have embarrassed a less determined man. The same is true of Rollins' earlier recordings. In his quest for an amalgam of sophistication and starkness Dorham attempts something very hard; when he succeeds, the effect is near-magical. Small wonder, then, that the trick is so difficult. On this Blue Note album, recorded at the Café Bohemia some three and a half years back, the ace juts out beneath his cuff a good deal of the time. On the faster tunes, the trumpet line tends to dullness, partly from recurrent uniformity in note values, partly from slightly imprecise timing. Perhaps Dorham's lip was out a little. In any event, the music lacks relief. The long solo on *Mexico City* is fleet, but undistinguished, and the break after the passing chords on *Night in Tunisia* typifies his unadventurous thinking. *Autumn in New York* and *'Round About Midnight* have far more attractive trumpet work. Both melodies provide an excellent showcase for his gemmed tone. Now sparkling, now sombre, it adds depth to each song in the time-honoured jazz ballad style. Monk's tune proves an excellent vehicle for Monterose. The second half of the opening chorus epitomizes his approach, for Monterose is the musical

equivalent of the young orator, nervous, maybe, but convinced of the truth of what he has to say. The stuttering vocalized effect and the play with dynamics not only carry rich emotional overtones but are vital features of a cohesive form of expression. The remarkable tenor solo on *Night in Tunisia* is to my ears the highspot of the record. Jabbing one moment, brooding with a mere modicum of notes the next, acting out a laconic dialogue with the piano chords, he runs through a whole range of effects; yet the overall impression is compact and satisfying. Burrell, whose guitar is featured only in solo, seems out of place. In sheer swing he outdoes the other members of the group, but neither tempi nor tunes seem altogether suited to his style.

Monaco finds him most relaxed, getting a good, singing tone that sets off his ideas very well. Throughout the record the soloists gain impetus from Timmons' adept chording; his accompaniment on *Autumn in New York* is particularly good. Though not markedly individual, his solos are well-constructed. The teamwork of Sam Jones and Arthur Edgehill provides backing that is more than adequate, but never burns with the fire of Paul Chambers and Philly Joe Jones. Nor is this comparison a malicious one, for the shadow of Davis' band lies heavily upon this group. The rhythmic conception is very similar, not only in drumming style, but from a general viewpoint—the pianist laying out one chorus and setting up a regular chordal pattern the next. Monterose excepted, there are better examples of all the principal soloists elsewhere on record. None the less, the improvisation is far from negligible; there are arresting passages on every track. Which is just as well, for neither the arrangements nor the compositions enhance the album's value. *'Round About Midnight* and *Monaco* apart, the scoring offers little in the way of variety, and neglects the third voice Burrell's guitar in the ensembles. Though the compositions are substantial enough, they hardly seem the ideal ones for this band. The liner notes speak of their homogeneity, but a more original choice might have yielded better results. Two of the tunes, in fact, are better known to us by other names: faced with *Mexico City*, Bud Powell must have been as surprised as Miles Davis confronted with *Hill's Edge*.

Michael James

TERRY GIBBS: "More Vibes on Velvet." Mercury MG 36148.

Terry Gibbs, vibes; Joe Maini, alto; other personnel unlisted. Arrangements by Manny Albam.

Moonlight Serenade; *Blues in the Night*; *Impossible*; *What Is there to Say*; *I Remember*; *The Things We Did Last Summer*; *You Make Me Feel So Young*; *At Last*; *Lazy Sunday*; *Everyday Is Spring with You*; *With All My Love to You*; *Don't Cry*.

John Tynan's album notes apply de-

scribe the record: "Saxes supply harmonic background . . . Terry spells out straight statements of the songs . . . lush saxes contrast . . . vibes fleetingly weave in and out and around."

What we have is an album that falls under the bastard classification of "mood music." Manny Albam has supplied incredibly uninteresting arrangements for the saxophone section—which are in keeping, however, with the soporific quality of Gibbs' playing. While I have never been a great admirer of either Gibbs or Albam as jazz musicians, they have here abandoned even the slightest claim to be considered as jazzmen. This is strictly music for Muzak.

There are moments in the recording when passing glances are cast at jazz in a rather wistful sort of way, but these moments are few. If the women's soap operas should ever feel inclined to use pseudo-jazz they have only to call on Albam and Gibbs who could become the Mancinis of

Portia Faces Life.

From the title and Tynan's notes, Notice that this a sequel to a previous album in the same style. There is evidently no limit to what mood music buyers will put up with. Bland, mediocre, and deadly dull.

H. A. Woodfin

JIMMY GIUFFRE: "Seven Pieces."

Verve MG V-8307.

Jimmy Giuffre, clarinet, tenor, baritones; Jim Hall, guitar; Red Mitchell, bass.

Happy man, *Lovely willow*, *Song of the wind*, *Princess*, *The story*, *The little melody*, *Time machine*.

With his music degree, his work with the Dallas Symphony and his long term of study in legitimate composition with Wesley La Violette, Giuffre is just the type of musician to recommend himself to certain factions in American jazz criticism. This has to be born in mind if the reception accorded his trio is not to seem puzzling. The simplicity of its work must, presumably, be seen as part of the diversified 'back to the roots' movement represented by the playing of Horace Silver, and records like the Milt Jackson-Ray Charles *Soul Brothers* or Brookmeyer's *Traditionalism Revisited*. The central point of Giuffre's attack has been the so-called 'folk' affiliations of his music. This aspect of the group's output has been accepted without any questions of from just what folk music it derives. Sure enough, jazz was created in America, but the elements of which it is composed are of European or African origin and a similar comment could be made on almost all American music. The exception is the red Indian melodies which no one has thought to fit into jazz. There is no clear relationship between Giuffre's work and any indigenous American folk music as there is between, for example, Chopin's stylistically refined mazurkas and the obereks, kujawiaks

and mazurs of the Polish peasantry, or between Bartók's compositions and the folk music of Hungary. We must assume commentators have been misled by the fugitive pastoral quality Giuffre's lines often have, and by the thick, soft, acronycal tone of his clarinet. His baritone and tenor sounds have come to resemble that of his clarinet extraordinarily and tone has always been the most personal single element in his work. This is as true of such comparatively early records as **Paicheck** or **Grass Point** as of more recent ones. All the compositions on the above record are Giuffre's own and in the liner note he writes, "a creative artist often finds that the most natural way to express himself is through his own rather than given material." This may be true for some of the greatest, for Morton, Ellington or Monk, but one doubts if it is true for Giuffre. Indeed, although he also maintains "seven diverse types of moods, tempos, forms, melodies and rhythms were explored," one of the most pressing criticisms of this album is the uniformly similiar character of its thematic ideas. The previous trio albums (Atlantic 1254 and 1282) were diversified with at least some "given material." In any case, the themes, which are simple almost to the point of commonplace, are developed at too great lengths and cannot support the structures based on them. This unvarying simplicity of theme and small vocabulary of individual phrases seems a little disingenuous in the context of contemporary jazz where men like John Lewis, Monk, Gil Evans, Rollins and Coltrane are among the leading figures. Giuffre's aim seems to be not merely to provide a framework for sequences of solos but to achieve a balance between composition and improvisation—an interaction of two processes that are not quite so separate as is often supposed. One would expect the material to be developed mainly by linear and rhythmic devices but in fact the chief means employed is variation of texture. A few of Giuffre's pieces, like **Two Kinds of Blues** and **The Train and the River**, if they appear rigidly stylised, do still have interesting textures and a suprising variety of sounds. However on the small scale of most jazz performances such methods are dangerous if pursued to the detriment of melodic, rhythmic and harmonic considerations and produce music that is too fragmentary. This is especially true of the two lp with Brookmeyer wherein the music was so discontinuous as to be inarticulate. Parker showed that discontinuity can be a valuable aid to achieving richness of melodic construction but Giuffre's apparent preoccupation with sound and texture seems to have led him to ignore the requirements of form that composition imposes. If this record is more enjoyable than the Atlantic collections it is because of the playing of Mitchell and Hall. Out

of the context of West Coast groups Mitchell shows himself to be a bassist of extraordinary flexibility. Almost all the trio's swing derives from him and he improvises solos and alert accompaniments with great resourcefulness and imagination, with some moments of unusual harmonic insight. Hall must be one of the best guitar players around now. He makes more of the instrument sound through the electricity than anyone since Charlie Christian. His solos are common place and often suffer from the discontinuity, if not the studied simplicity, of Giuffre's contributions, but his accompaniments display a ready responsiveness and group feeling. At many points, e.g. in **Happy Man**, guitar and bass make a beautiful sound together and Mitchell does much to ameliorate the fragmentary nature of the music. The leader's playing isn't really much different from that on earlier releases, but he does respond to Mitchell's presence sometimes—as in the clarinet solo at the beginning of **Song of the Wind**, which has better continuity and flow than usual. He even uses a little of the instrument's upper register and does not seem quite so wary of being caught out in a simple, zestful phrase. Yet despite Mitchell the group's basic faults remain. The weaknesses are most clear at slow tempos like that of **Lovely Willow**, because here the lack of rhythmic interest in Giuffre's ideas is most acute. The frequent moments of subtlety are not denied but the lack of sustained rhythmic invention on the parts of Giuffre and Hall results in a lack of apparent impetus. It might be that some use of counterpoint would prove beneficial to Giuffre, imparting direction and purpose to his textural manipulations and acting as a discipline on the formal waywardness of his music. As it is one is left with an impression of music that is subtle, devious and searching, but which only communicates on a level of vague, somewhat impersonal, nostalgia.

Max Harrison

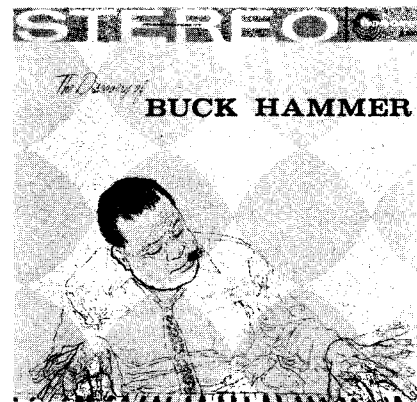
BABS GONZALES: "Tales of Manhattan." Jaro JAM 5000

Babs Gonzales, monologues; Kenny Burrell, guitar; Peck Morrison, bass; Roy Haynes, drums; unnamed multiple reed man; arranged by Melba Liston.

The Hat Box Chicks; Broadway—4 A.M.; **You Need Connections;** "Dem Resolution Liars **Manhattan Fable;** "Dem Jive New Yorkers; **The Squares;** A Dollar is your Only Friend; **The Cool Cat's Philosophy;** Ole Braggin' Freddie.

This lp of hip monologues will certainly sell as a party record, and it is certainly a good one. But beyond that it holds several lessons, for it is more fun and sharper social documentation than Hughes' **Simple** stories, and Babs Gonzales cuts Jon Hendricks to ribbons as a hip rhymester.

Maybe he has an easier job in not having to cope with someone-else's phrasing and notes, but certainly he



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.

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achieves the same brightness and verve, and he adds a keep satirical eye that sees the ridiculous in the real, a fine accurate ear with complete mastery of hip jargon, and a point of view penetrated with light-hearted, slightly desperate and characteristically Uptown cynicism.

His subjects are drawn from New York, and more especially the Manhattan of the unattached city Negro—the Times Square district, the hall bedroom in the crumbling brownstone, hangin' out in the joints (There's Tommy and Willy, and **My Man Cal**), the square with his day gig and the Cadillac boys with their nightly dues. His form is the skit phrased in the traditional rhymed couplets of the Dozens. It is doggerel, of course, but doggerel with sureness of touch, tough-mindedness and economy, and so natural and compelling in its speech rhythm, and accurate in its accent, that it has the flow of good blank verse—although I suppose one would not comment on his accent if others were not so anxious to conceal theirs. Several sketches on the record are commonplace inspite of verbal ingenuity: **A Dollar, You Need Connections**, the Runyonesque **Manhattan Fable** and **The Cool Cat's Philosophy** are banal themes. But **the Hat Box Chicks** has a few good moments of observation and a wild conceit that recalls **Saunders King Blues**. **The Squares** is at once funny and grim, and the whole sequence after the square leaves work is marvelously accurate.

The best tracks are in another realm. **Dem Jive New Yorkers** is a catalogue of roccoco inventions about everybody's hypes, from the minister to the neighborhood dope-peddler, and its details include the delightfully pretentious lady shop-lifter who owned the 'zircon-diamond ring.' And **Broadway—4 A.M.** is an accurate, pitiless description of the street at closing time, perfect and complete.

The two tracks that catch perfectly one aspect of the scene are **Dem Resolution Liars** and **'Ole Braggin' Freddie**. They are about two sides of the same subject: frustration and compensation.

Dem Resolution Liars is a lesson on the fascination and the foolishness of hangin' out—"You knew that was jivin' and stiffin', but vanity being your case"—a perfect picture of the need for companionship at whatever cost, the need to be a big man even if you can't keep it up past pay-day night, and a perfect picture of the essentially anonymous easy sociability based on mutual need that cannot afford to recognize its source, the need that drives the hanger-out into a world of appearance, of fantasy.

'Ole Braggin' Freddie has the fantasy in its worst form. He has become, in his cups, the nonpareil lover and complete man of the world, and he boasts of the clothes, the great big pretty car, travels abroad, the maid, the castle by the sea—all the world of appearance,

which is so fascinating to those who live in want, symbols of the power that fascinates those who live in perpetual frustration.

If Babs Gonzales can continue in this vein, he may succeed in articulating a whole section of American life that has existed almost unrecorded. He might serve then not only the cause of the Negro in America, but the cause of all of us who can afford to recognize in the plight of others what we can ill afford to see in our own.

Hsio Wen Shih

COLEMAN HAWKINS: "The High and Mighty Hawk." Felsted FAJ 7005.

Coleman Hawkins, tenor; Buck Clayton, trumpet; Hank Jones, piano; Ray Brown, bass; Mickey Sheen, drums.

Bird of Prey Blues; My one and only Love; **Vignette**; Ooh-Wee; **Miss G. P.**; You've Changed; **Get Set**.

This is certainly an enjoyable record. To me, Coleman Hawkins is a real artist of sincerity and warmth; he always makes music. I've been told he doesn't swing, but I think he does, although his rhythmic conception is not what I'm used to hearing.

Hawkins' performance here is one of many examples of how he can use the techniques of music and technical advances in jazz to his own advantage—use them and remain his own man. (Of course he may have played this way all along; if so, harmonically he was ahead of his contemporaries.) He plays what I call "big horn," but also a fluid horn with warmth, and I never feel that he over-does his own style of improvising.

Buck Clayton is one of the trumpet players I envy; for the sake of my own ego, I listen to him hoping he will do something wrong. He never does, so I have to be content to love him for his "straight ahead" style, his taste, and his musicianship.

Hank Jones is one of the most able accompanists for not getting in anyone's way harmonically. I wish there were more records which showed freely the full use of his abilities; there are already so many on which he is the perfect accompanist.

Ray Brown was the first bass player after Oscar Pettiford who seemed really to play the bass. With Pettiford, he deserves credit for setting a high standard of bass playing for younger men who didn't hear Jimmy Blanton. Ray is an artist of finesse on an instrument on which artistry and finesse are difficult to achieve. Like Pettiford, Charlie Mingus, and Milt Hinton, Ray can give good account of himself under any circumstances. In spite of the fact that he began, as the notes say, by winning a drum contest, Mickey Sheen doesn't seem to be a drummer who would be difficult to play with. As I said, this is to me a very enjoyable record. It has performances of quality by all involved; they weren't lacking in any respect, which is no less than can be expected of these musi-

cians. They are at all times themselves—I can't find any fault with that.

Art Farmer

THAD JONES: "Detroit-New York Junction." Blue Note 1513.

Thad Jones, trumpet; Billy Mitchell, tenor; Tommy Flanagan, piano; Oscar Pettiford, bass; Kenny Burrell, guitar; Shadow Wilson, drums.

Blue Room; Tariff; **Little Girl Blue**; **Scratch**; **Zec**.

THAD JONES: "The magnificent". Blue Note 1527.

Thad Jones, trumpet; Billy Mitchell, tenor; Barry Harris, piano; Percy Heath, bass; Max Roach, drums.

April in Paris; Billie Doo; **If I Love Again**; **If Someone Had Told Me**; **Thedia**.

Thad Jones always seems to be in someone's shadow. In Basie's band, Joe Newman cops most of the solos, and even in his family he is thought of as Hank's younger brother. Thad is much more than that; he is probably one of the best trumpet players in modern jazz.

Thad Jones has a beautiful ringing sound, and uses the upper register superbly. He is a consummate technician, and his use of technique I feel is an integral part of his originality. Many of his pet phrases are difficult to play. He often plays long staccato phrases in the upper register at a fast tempo. The highest note in such a phrase often comes in the middle, which means he has to pop it off without setting his embouchure. Perhaps that is why his influence on his contemporaries is negligible (though Joe Newman does sometimes play like Thad). Few hornmen were carbons of Dizzy; they couldn't reproduce his style for technical reasons.

In his first Blue Note lp he was accompanied largely by fellow Detroiters. These five numbers, with plenty of solo space, have more cohesiveness than most recorded Blowing sessions, probably because the musicians are familiar with each other and with the material (Thad recorded **Zec** and **Blue Room** for the Dee Gee label with a group under Billy Mitchell's name.) The rhythm section is fine, giving unobtrusive but steady support to the soloists. Pettiford and Wilson play up to their usual standards and Tommy Flanagan is the tastiest this side of Hank Jones.

Billy Mitchell sounds good here; on **Scratch** and **Zec** he is very forceful. His phrasing is similar to Rollins', but he uses the upper register in a highly effective and original way. And he is better on the second set. He is an experienced musician who has assimilated facets of many tenor men into his style and shows inventiveness within the mainstream.

Thad is credited with writing four of the five tunes. They are supposed to be vehicles for extended blowing but are clever little lines in themselves, and

are well played by the horns. The second side of the LP is the better. Thad's solo on **Scratch** is solidly constructed. He paces himself intelligently, mixing gracefully-slurred long note passages with rapid double time phrases. His tone is full and sound throughout the range of the horn, his execution flawless. Tommy Flanagan's solo here is a compact thing of beauty and he shows his sense of humor by playing an incongruous Silver-like, last bar.

Zec, the up-tempo number of the set, demonstrates Thad's ability to play with great force without becoming frantic. Hearing it is like being pushed against a soft rubber wall by a hurricane and being held there: you aren't being hurt but something tremendously strong is holding you. The solo is also a perfect example of his high-note popping technique.

In the second set, the front line stays the same but the rhythm section changes and improved by the consistently brilliant work of Max Roach. Listen to the variety of lines he lays down.

Barry Harris resembles Flanagan, whom he is supposed to have taught in Detroit. His touch is possibly a bit more percussive; his left hand more sparse. His solo work shows the same solidity and good taste.

Mitchell is better here than on Volume I. His lines are generally better constructed and on the fast **Love Again** he recalls some of the exquisiteness of Lucy Thompson.

April in Paris is a nice contrast to the Basie version (but still includes the "Pop goes the Weasel" quote). The rhythm section is a model here. Max's brush work seems to provide exactly the right shading.

I've Got a Crush on You is included in Volume III (Blue Note 1546) but was apparently made during the same date as the tracks on Volume II. It is perhaps the most fully realized example of Thad's ballad playing. He states the verse and then plays the chorus with unabashed romanticism. His vibrato is beautifully controlled, his phrasing so graceful it implies a waltz. He departs from the melody by playing shorter notes and double timing somewhat like Sonny Rollins. Also like Rollins he never completely throws the melody away. Then he gives way to Harris who plays some lush chords and sets him up for the final statement of the verse.

Thad's full-tone recalls the Diz's beautiful open work on **Round Midnight** and **I Can't Get Started** in the mid 1940's, but by now Diz's influence is more implied than specific of course.

Billie Doo the blues tune is a cute theme by Thad. His suave playing shows how far the blues have come since Johnny Dodds.

Theda is probably the best thing on Volume II. Mitchell's solo is very intense. His tone is more like Sonny Stitt here. Heath says his piece well and

leads Thad into a solo that matches the **Scratch** side in Volume I. The Gillespie influence is most apparent here. He hits a high note and down-slurs several times in Diz's fashion; some of his ascending runs also sound like Diz. These sets represent some of the best recorded examples of Thad's work and of East Coast jazz.

Harvey Pekar

WYNTON KELLY: "Kelly Blue."

Riverside 12-298.

Wynton Kelly, piano; Nat Adderley, cornet; Bobby Jaspar, flute; Benny Golson, tenor; Paul Chambers, bass; Jimmy Cobb, drums.

Kelly Blue; **Willow Weep for Me**.

Kelly, piano; Chambers, bass; Cobb, drums.

Softly, as in a Morning Sunrise; **Green Dolphin Street**; **Keep It Moving**; **Old Clothes**.

It has become increasingly obvious in the past year or so that Wynton Kelly has developed into one of the most interesting pianists of the post-bop generation. Kelly's style is, fundamentally, blues-oriented, and almost all of his work shows it. But if this were all his style, it would scarcely be as interesting as it is. Kelly, at his best, possesses a sharply developed ability to construct a melodic solo of nearly constant interest. His solos are usually characterised by a long, sinuous, and steadily mounting line each segment of which follows neatly from its predecessor. Add to this his nice sense of time and accent, and we have a soloist of no mean ability.

Of course, this is not to say that Kelly is without fault. He has a most annoying habit, when inspiration seems to run short, of handing the listener a garland of Garlandisms. This reliance upon Garland clichés causes a certain discontinuity to appear in many of his solos. Also, with all due respect to the blues, it is trying to find every number treated in a blues style.

The bulk of the present rather disappointing lp finds him with fellow employees of the Miles Davis. Of the trio selections it seems to me that **Softly, As in a Morning Sunrise** and **Willow Weep for Me** are the most consistent in quality. **Green Dolphin Street** and **Old Clothes** have good beginnings, but soon flag. **Softly** has a splendid introduction by Kelly which leads directly to the exposition, from which he builds his solo with a steady attention to melodic detail. Here, and again in **Willow** which he builds with considerable emotional power, part of the effect is vitiated by the intrusion of Red.

Chambers functions well in his seemingly imperturbable fashion both in accompaniment and in solo. However, I have the feeling that Chambers has not as yet displayed his talents at their full strength. When he does, it should be well worth hearing since he has everything re-

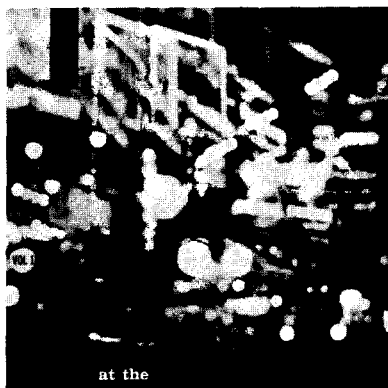
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quired to produce a great bassist. Cobb, on the other hand, is academic, with reference to Roach, Blakey, and Philly Joe. At best he appears to be a good time keeper, but, as yet, he does not demonstrate that empathy which a drummer should have with a soloist.

The sextet tracks are undistinguished examples of sophisticated funk which rapidly pall after the first hearing. Kelly has a good probing solo on **Kelly Blue**, but his is the only one. On both the latter and **Keep It Moving** the other soloists seem rather uninterested in the whole affair. Benny Golson has not yet resolved his apparently conflicting interests in the styles of Lucky Thompson and John Coltrane. I had thought he might be able to perfect a Benny Golson style from the two influences, and there have been hints in some of his work that he was doing just that. However, on **Kelly Blue**, for instance, he divides his solo into one part Thompson and one part Coltrane, with the result that the juxtaposition of the two is disconcerting to say the least. Nor is either part of the solo particularly worthy in itself. Bobby Jaspar's solos are barren of anything technique. Nat Adderley, like Golson, seems torn—here between the styles of Miles Davis and Dizzy Gillespie with a moment or two from an unusually lively Chet Baker in **Kelly Blue**. On the whole scarcely an essential recording, but one worth hearing for Kelly.

H. A. Woodfin

"THELONIOUS MONK orchestra at Town Hall." Riverside RLP 12-300. Donald Byrd, trumpet; Eddie Bert, trombone; Robert Northern, horn; Jay McAllister, tuba; Phil Woods, alto; Charlie Rouse, tenor; Pepper Adams, baritone; Thelonious Monk, piano; Sam Jones, bass; Art Taylor, drums. All compositions are by Mr. Monk and orchestrated by Hall Overton. **Thelonious**; Friday the 13th; **Monk's Mood**; Little Rootie-Rootie; **Off Minor**; **Crepescale with Nellie**.

This lp contains some of the items from the concert reviewed by Gunther Schuller in **The Jazz Review** for June, 1959. Forgetting the concert and listening to it simply as another record it appears the weakest in Monk's Riverside series in that it tells us nothing new about him. Each of the themes orchestrates well enough for this medium-sized ensemble but their essential character is in no way enhanced or more clearly delineated. One of the most notable features of Monk's best pieces is that they are compositions—statements and developments of specific musical ideas—for particular groups of instruments. In some of them, such as **Criss Cross** or the original **Misterioso**, the ideas and the manner in which they are developed seem perfectly suited to the

instruments employed. In short, arrangement in the sense of transference from one medium to another is likely to serve no effective purpose for this music. Hall Overton, who wrote the orchestrations under Monk's direction, has done his work competently but without much imagination. Some of the theme-derived backgrounds for solos are good but there is too much block chord scoring. One does not expect counterpoint from Monk but we might have had some of those oppositions of simultaneous patterns of which he is fond (e.g. the Blue Note **Epistrophe** and **Evidence**) of which he is fond. In its registers the group is bottom-heavy, but its potentialities of tone and texture are scarcely explored at all, except in a very obvious way in **Monk's mood** where the horns are divided into two 'opposing' groups. The seeming exception to this is the orchestration of part of Monk's original piano solo of **Little Rootie Tootie**. This is a **tour de force** of considerable ingenuity and striking for that reason but, again, it is music Monk conceived in terms of the hard, percussive sound he obtains from the piano. It is less, not more, effective when blown up to more than its natural size of sound. Another normal quality of Monk's work is its clarity, even hardness, of outline. The combination of piano and seven horns on **Crepescale with Nellie** is messy and thoroughly unfortunate compared to the first Riverside version with four horns. Perhaps the nature of this music is such that it is best performed by small groups. In **Metronome**, March 1957 Monk said he liked writing for six pieces best and perhaps that is still true today. Certainly his trio (Blue Note) and septet (Riverside) versions of **Off Minor** are superior to this new one. It is nonetheless to be hoped that Monk will try an experiment of this sort again, perhaps seeking advice, but doing all the writing himself. As far as this record is concerned the liner notes are wrong in saying the medium-sized unit "provides a much fuller presentation of Monk's rhythmic and harmonic ideas than could be possible with the smaller groups." For the present the contrary is true. If these ensembles do have the vigour indispensable to the adequate performance of Monk's pieces they are not an extension of his most valuable qualities. Nor are the horn solos as good as those on the best of his earlier recordings. Wood's solos on **Friday**, **Mood** and **Off Minor** have a curiously static quality. Lacking melodic impulse, they seem tied to the chords. In **Monk's Mood** he decorates the theme resourcefully enough but appears unable to get away from it. Rouse has one or two striking moments in **Friday** and gets off to a good start in **Rootie Tootie** but these are not sustained and his solos are almost as undistinguished as those of Woods. Despite his competence this tenor player has always been

a strictly limited musician—at least in the recording studio. The earliest examples of his work with which I am acquainted are his solos on Dameron's **Our delight**, **The Squirrel**, **Dameronia** and **The Chase** made for Blue Note in 1947. There is no doubt he is a better performer now, but the content of his solos has hardly changed. Byrd is in some respects better. His tone is too small but is fairly individual. The invention is quite well maintained but few of his ideas are really personal, really his own. Nor are adjacent phrases always clearly related to each other, so his solos give the impression of being assembled out of fragments rather than growing of themselves. The trumpet solos on **Friday** and **Rootie Tootie** are notably formless—the latter containing some ill-advised double-timing—and Byrd would create a stronger impression if his solos were shorter.

Monk himself is in excellent almost throughout. His **Friday** solo, all of it clearly developed from the melodic outline of the theme, is probably the best. **Mood** draws attention to a weakness in Monk's style. As a whole the opening piano solo is very good, with many instances of his individual sense of time, but the redundant descending and ascending decorative runs clash unsuitably with the rather unconventional keyboard layout of the whole. In his second solo on this Monk paraphrases the theme in an inimitable manner. He accompanies the soloists well—his chording is particularly incisive in **Off Minor**—but with less daring than usual. This we may attribute to the unaccustomed and not really appropriate surroundings.

Max Harrison

WARNE MARSH. Atlantic 1291.

Warne Marsh, tenor; Ronnie Ball, piano; Paul Chambers, bass; Philly Joe Jones, drums. **Too Close for Comfort**; **It's All Right With Me**. Marsh, tenor; Chambers, bass; Paul Motian, drums.

Yardbird Suite; **My Melancholy Baby**; **Just Squeeze Me**; Excerpt.

Warne Marsh was given a free hand in this recording to display his talents. There are no arrangements, and two of the tracks are not even complete 'takes.' With the exception of **Yardbird Suite**, the tunes are all standards (**Extract** is an improvisation based on the changes of **I'll Remember April**). The responsibility involved in such a recording is obvious. There are few soloists active today who are capable of bringing off a half hour of practically continuous improvisation. Marsh is not one of those few, and his performance here would have been more satisfactory if there had been an arranged basis.

In the liner notes, Marsh is quoted as saying that "music [should not be] distorted by any elements of your personality that might tend to take away from it as music. That's the difference

between the artistic approach and the approach of the personality." What Marsh fails to understand is that the two facts are not mutually irreconcilable. It is just this refusal to recognize the importance of the individual personality, and the influence which it can and should have upon improvisation, that spelled out the defeat of the 'cool' jazz. And it is also just this refusal that makes so much of Marsh's playing boring and tedious. There is no question about his talent. That exists in abundance. But his consistent repression of the emergent personality in his work has been the greatest obstacle to his artistic achievement.

The immediate result of all this is that the rhythm section of Paul Chambers and Philly Joe Jones steals all the marbles. It's a good one for Marsh, though, because he plays best on tunes that include Chambers and Jones—despite the valueless 'comping' of Ronnie Ball, who is completely overwhelmed in this kind of cooking session.

The most satisfying track on the record is probably **Just Squeeze Me**. Marsh gets into a good groove at the very outset and swings throughout. Chambers starts out by putting everybody on, and winds up playing a thoroughly delightful solo. As in most of his recordings, Paul Motian's work is competent and workmanlike, but in this case it suffers by comparison with the exciting intricacies of Philly Joe.

Although Marsh has a tendency to play a bit too far under the beat, his rhythms are generally quite interesting. One of the Tristano school's main objectives has been (as it was in a different way to Charlie Parker) the destruction of the bar line as an impediment to free improvisation. The result is that Marsh is able to play a phrase or motive and give it the same rhythmic impetus regardless of where it originates in the measure, either on or off the beat. This one, single technique gives him an amazing amount of rhythmic freedom, for example his solo on **Excerpt**.

Marsh gets the peculiar sort of tone quality that comes as the result of using the mouth cavity as an extension of the mouthpiece's resonating chamber. This type of sound is generally furthered by the use of a fairly soft reed and is not the most ideal arrangement for the proper production of tone. When the mouth is used for resonance that much, the reed can no longer be properly controlled and tends to produce squawks and breaks of register in the octave change. Such distractions have been a constantly disturbing adjunct of Marsh's playing. It's a shame that he insists upon so many self-limiting methods. Marsh's emphasis on the development of his improvisational abilities is admirable in intention, but is not justified by the results on this recording. His most complimentary setting thus

far has been among men who share his viewpoint of jazz, and with material that has defined limits. I hope his next session is once again within the confines of this environment.

Don Heckman

HERBIE NICHOLS: "Love, Gloom, Cash, Love." Bethlehem BOP 81.

Herbie Nichols, piano; George Duvivier, bass; Danny Richmond, drums.

Too Close for Comfort; Every Cloud; Argumentative; Love, Gloom, Cash, Love; Portrait of UCHA; Beyond Recall; All the Way; 45 Angle; Infatuation Eyes; S'Crazy Pad.

The reasons for comparing Herbie Nichols with Monk are pretty obvious; certainly an original stylist, he plays as if conversing with himself. That is to say, he'll play a short phrase of the tune, interpose an angular, rather dissonant motive, and so on, combining this with elusive mumblings in the left hand.

But Nichols is far from the champion that Monk is. First of all, there are a great many unassimilated borrowings, from Garner in the first tune, **Too Close for Comfort**, or from the common property Tatum-cocktail piano style passim. One has the feeling that if Nichols would junk the fluttering arpeggios and descending scales, or make them his own as Monk has, his style would be what it should be in principle. For he shows a great deal of originality in phrasing and accentuation, and likes to build his tunes (seven of the ten bands are original) around emotional situations that are attractively heartfelt and natural. Born in 1919, he has the advantage of understanding and liking more than one way of piano playing, and the richness of experience and varied musical contacts that all except the most gifted need. So, give Herbie Nichols his due for originality; his record deserves a listening. I think however, he needs a drummer more sympathetic than Danny Richmond, one who isn't rattled so much by the kind of rhythmic deviations Nichols uses, if his playing is to appear in the best light. **Portrait of Ucha** is an intriguing piece; possibly, like the other tunes here, it fools with the beat too much to swing properly, but I think more congenial bass and drums would change this.

Larry Gushee

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ALTON PURNELL: "Funky Piano—New Orleans Style." Warner Brothers W1228. Yancey Special; Stackolee; Pine Top's Boogie; Yellow Dog Blues; Sentimental Journey; Slow Goin', Fast Comin' Back; Buster Anderson's Blues; I Want You—I Need You; Alberta; C. C. Rider; Someday You'll Be Sorry; St. Louis Blues.

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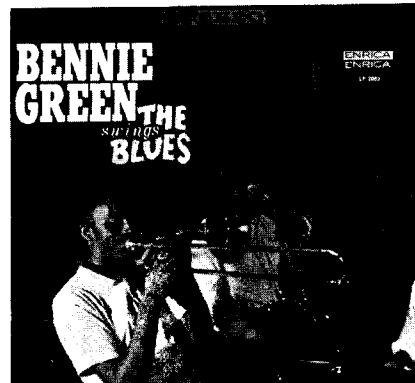
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ard introduction to the Bunk Johnson Victors of 1945 (you can hear it on **Someday You'll Be Sorry**) and a standard, soggy solo during which the whole recording collapsed (you can hear it on **Slow Goin', Fast Comin' Back**). Now he lives in Southern California "where his special brand of pure jazz has attracted a wide following." This apparently is "primitive jazz with a kind of vulgarity perhaps, but importantly a strength, a boldness, a vitality, a color, a sound, an attitude, a lot of things that gave jazz what it needed to become the great American art."

If I have quoted at lengths that may appear unnecessary it is because I wish to illustrate the fundamental emptiness of this type of writing which seeks to explain away major weaknesses in the music, and the inexactitude of jazz terms that are divested of any real meaning by such use. But I agree; there is vulgarity. Purnell vulgarises most of what he plays: his **Yancey Special** is a debased version of Meade Lewis' composition; in **Buster Anderson's Blues** he plays a caricature of Yancey himself. Utterly devoid of new ideas, or even sensitive interpretation of old one, his jangle-box version of **Pinetop's Boogie** makes painful listening. To confirm how far he is from any real feeling for blues or boogie, compare this with the original of over thirty years ago.

Except for his solos, Purnell's inadequacies as a pianist used to be hidden in the volume of sound of a full band; even here he has instrumental support ("funky rhythm accompaniment" according to the label) which consists of a poor r & b saxophonist who honks, boots and stumbles his way through most of the tracks with a taste that prompts him to put a quote from Pee Wee Hunt's "**Twelfth Street Rag**" into "**Slow Goin'**," a sad parody of **Just a Closer Walk with Thee** on which a one-to-the-bar-and-live-for-ever tuba player joins in—and a loud, skin-bashing drummer who cannot cope with the tango rhythm of the release in **St. Louis Blues**. In Purnell's vocals, sung in a taut, nasal and unattractive voice are to be heard overtones of Armstrong, Waller and Fats Domino without the merits of any of them. In a blues such as **C. C. Rider** his inability to invest the lyrics or the music with any depth of meaning becomes sadly apparent, but the measure of his worth is perhaps best indicated by the fact that one can anticipate every phrase before it is played, so tired and worn are the runs that he employs. Placed alongside, such a pianist as Willie Perryman ceases to appear a mere imitator of the blues.

The sleeve informs me that the recorded channel Ampex tape recorders, latest condenser microphones . . . with Vitaphone FNV optimum frequency range control are used. Electronically controlled variable pitch Scully lathes

. . . Westrex feedback cutters . . . RIAA playback curve . . . Roloff 13.75 DB at 10 KC . . . It does not tell me however much about Alton Purnell, the identity of the saxophonist, the name of the drummer or that of the tuba player, the date of the recording or the location; details that might be considered of greater importance. To definitions of "funky" add: "inept" and "cliché-ridden."

Paul Oliver

MAX ROACH: "The Max Roach Four Plays Charlie Parker." Mercury MG 36127.

Kenny Dorham, trumpet; Hank Mobley, tenor; George Morrow, bass; Max Roach, drums. **Yardbird Suite**; Confirmation; **Après-vous**. Kenny Dorham, trumpet; George Coleman, tenor; Nelson Boyd, bass; Max Roach, drums. **Ko-Ko**; Billie's Bounce; **Parker's Mood**.

Individual capabilities hardly enter into a comparison between the two dates that make up this album. The second was far more productive, not because George Coleman is a superior tenor player to Hank Mobley or Nelson Boyd a better bassist than George Morrow, but because both Dorham and Mobley sound surprisingly listless on the first. In **Confirmation** Mobley shows good constructive sense, but untidy execution makes his two choruses sound like a rehearsal of a solo rather than a solo proper; and Dorham is worse still; his tone is ragged and his sense of timing woefully inadequate. Listen, for example, to the way he anticipates the beat on **Après-vous**, better known as **Au Privave**. Thus the complex runs figure as so many frills. Roach provides the main interest. For once one can be glad the drummer got as much solo space as the other musicians.

The second session found Dorham in better form. **Ko-ko**, the least impressive performance of the three, shows a more clearly defined production of notes on his part even at this very rapid pace. The rhythmic conception (Boyd plays only on the alternate beats) makes great demands on the hornmen. Elsewhere on the record, the absence of a piano might be construed as an asset for Roach's deft accompaniment takes its place, but here, with Dorham and Coleman failing to answer the tempo's challenge, one soon becomes aware of a dearth of melody. Such is not the case with **Billie's Bounce** and **Parker's Mood**. Coleman is the first soloist on the former tune. His light tone and attractive if hardly personal style lend the performance a liteness that is refreshing after the stagnancy of the earlier recordings. Paradoxically enough, Mobley seems to be the main influence. Nelson Boyd's bass line stands out full and strong behind Coleman's pliant phrasing and behind Dorham on **Parker's Mood**. After the introduction the trumpeter begins his solo by playing Parker's first chorus and then goes on to create his best solo of the album, making apt use of half-

valve effects. Coleman is good too, the sombre feeling in his work giving way eventually to some light-hearted effects that find an echo in the skittishness of Dorham's last solo. Roach's exchanges with the horns have a logical pattern and swing that are never compromised by the very slow tempo. The poorer sequences on this record are thrown into sharper relief than would normally be the case by the quality of Parker's compositions. It is very disappointing, for instance, that more was not made of so beautiful a melody as **Yardbird Suite**.

The leader himself never falters, and the perfection of his work is almost a reproach to Dorham and Mobley in particular.

Many, I fear, will be tempted to compare these performances with the originals: the comparison, to say the least, will not be flattering.

Michael James

CECIL TAYLOR: "Hard Driving Jazz." United Artists 4014.

Cecil Taylor, piano; Kenny Dorham, trumpet; Blue Train, tenor; Chuck Israels, bass; Louis Hayes, drums.

Double Clutching; Like Someone in Love; **Shifting Down**; Just Friends.

As much as I hate having to start out on a sour note, I must. There is only one thing really wrong with this recording, but it is a major factor—Cecil Taylor's accompanying. He is an over-busy comper who interferes with the soloist.

Mind, now, I am not speaking of Taylor's solo work. He is a fresh and intriguing soloist with a startling new approach to jazz which is really something else. His studies of Bartok and Stravinsky I don't need to go into; everybody knows about that. The influence of Thelonious Monk is also an old story. These and other factors have been assimilated by Taylor and fused into a highly personal, exciting style. But he is not a good comper. The liner notes on this record say that "like Monk, Taylor is an extremely percussive and busy pianist whose harmonic and rhythmic lines present a continuous challenge to the ear of the soloist." But Monk is a very spare comper who, though he may play all kinds of odd chords, never gets in the way of the soloist.

Fortunately, there is a powerful controlling influence present—Coltrane, who has a way of forcing the rhythm section to adapt to him. In his solo spots on this record he takes over completely, and that is when Taylor doesn't get in the way so much. By the time they get to the last track, Taylor has gotten the idea, and the soloists can breathe more easily.

Trane, incidentally, comes up with some of his finest solos ever. He opens up on **Shifting Down** in typical Coltrane fashion—doesn't it remind you of the way he starts **Traneing In?**—and goes on from there to build up a cook-

ing solo. His playing on the two standards displays, even at those tempos, that intense lyricism that is major characteristic of his style. He gets into a surprisingly relaxed groove in **Double Clutching** but it's Coltrane's relaxed groove, no one else's. Dorham seems a bit uncomfortable at the beginning—I noticed a certain tension in his solo—but by the time the group gets to the second track, **Like Someone In Love**, he is his old self. He and Coltrane should play together more; they complement each other beautifully.

As I said earlier, Taylor is a fresh and intriguing soloist, and he really does things. He gets right down and cooks on the final **Just Friends**. On the two blues lines he takes advantage of his solo space to engage in some interesting harmonic explorations. This is where he is most comfortable, and I have the feeling that he should stay with trio work, where he will have the greatest opportunity to expand. Bassist Israel is promising, with a good, though not particularly big, sound and accurate intonation—this last, as far as I'm concerned, is requisite. He has ideas, and he gets a chance to express them here. He is also an excellent rhythm man, laying down strong lines. As for Louis Hayes, I am really sorry that he didn't get more solo space than those fours on **Double Clutching**; he is one of the most exciting drummers around.

This is an interesting record, well worth repeated hearings, and but for that one sour note, very good indeed.

Zita Carno

Lightnin' Hopkins: Folkways LP FS 3822.

The amplifier and the drummer were left behind at a jook joint on Dowling Street, and Lightning with only his guitar, a bottle of gin, his thoughts, and his feelings sat down and put on tape some creative personal and emotional music. On this lp, his first, (the Score lp consisted of reissues and old masters from Aladdin) we find Lightnin' generally in a sad and reflective mood. His humor and his unpredictability as well as his incredible ability to make his guitar become alive and talk to him and with him, make this a very delightful and varied listening experience.

"**Penitentiary Blues**" has been recorded previously on a number of occasions by another Texas blues singer Smokey Hogg, and is considered by many as a traditional Texas prison song. But Lightnin' is not the type to faithfully reproduce old songs word for word, rather he will create his own stories and make a very personal experience out of borrowed songs such as this one. He gives us his own personal experiences on prison farms, and all through the song he insists that he is doing time for

another man. Lightnin' becomes very emotional on **Bad Luck and Trouble**, which in a sense combines two songs which he has recorded earlier: **So Long** (Aladdin) and **Bad Luck and Trouble** (RPM) for one of the most moving and convincing tracks on the lp.

On **Come Go Home With Me** Lightnin' changes his mood entirely; a shuffle rhythm lays the foundation for a wonderfully amusing, relaxed monologue about what Lightnin' thinks of this girl about whom Papa and Mama have warned him. This is the type of material that puts him above any of his contemporary blues singers, his creative ability at its best. His recent single discs have not reflected this aspect of his talent, but about eight years ago he made quite a few which I would put with this one—his hilarious **Bald Headed Woman** (Sittin' in With 647) comes to mind. This talent is exhibited on most of his sides for Mercury.

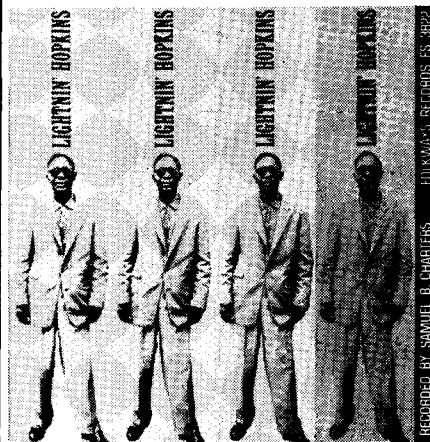
Possibly the best side of the lp is **Trouble Stay Away from my Door**. It is a very powerful, very personal blues highlighted by some extremely sensitive and emotional guitar work.

See That My Grave is Kept Clean finishes the first side; it is the old Blind Lemon Jefferson number which Lightnin' sings straight and with little personal involvement. As I mentioned before, Lightnin' does not often sing traditional tunes in their "original" form, and this seems to be a rare exception. On the RPM recording of this number, titled **One Kind Favor** (RPM 359) he asks for his girl to give her love to him, and not for someone to keep his grave clean! Here incidentally, the guitar at times sounds almost like church bells ringing for the funeral.

Fan It is a rather monotonous item and Lightnin' does not save it. **Tell Me Baby** is a straight, rather uneventful blues delivered with little of the emotion and personal concern which made the blues on side one so outstanding. Charters called the closing track of the lp: **She's Mine** and this boogie begins with that phrase and continues until it becomes almost monotonous, when all of a sudden he transforms it into an instrumental with interjected comments, at times slapping the guitar with his hand. This latter part is almost an identical performance to his **Lightning Boogie** (Gold Star 664) which was, as this one is, delightful with bright humor. No doubt much of the material which Lightnin' develops in his songs is derived from other blues, but almost every number becomes a personal experience with him; the fact that Sam Charters had to give names to many of these attests to this. Here is a truly creative Let me give credit to Sam Charters and Mack McCormick who spent a great deal of time and effort in locating Sam Hopkins, and let us hope that this lp will lead to the presentation of Lightnin's talent on a grand scale both on future recordings and personal appearances.

Chris Strachwitz

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JAZZ IN PRINT

by NAT HENTOFF

Jelly Roll in Congress - On page 15956 of the August 31 Congressional Record, Senator Keating says: "Mr. President, I should like to offer a small historical footnote to the current debate with respect to the Lake Michigan water-diversion bill. I do not anticipate this offering will change any votes, but it may be of interest at least to those Senators who are students or connoisseurs of American jazz. The late Jelly Roll Martin [sic], one of the great pianists which New Orleans gave to the Nation, used to sing a 12-bar blues song not long after the turn of the century, and the title of that song was 'Michigan Water Blues.' The first chorus went as follows: 'Michigan water tastes like sherry wine (I mean sherry wine); Mississippi water tastes like turpentine, Michigan water tastes like sherry wine.' "Frankly," the Senator added, "I do not know at this point whether Michigan water tastes like sherry wine, but even if it should, that would still be no justification

for diverting it to the Chicago sewer system." Richard Weissman, 156 West 106th Street, New York 25, N.Y. is doing a master's thesis on Blind Blake, Gary Davis, Blind Boy Fuller, Blind Lemon Jefferson and Willie Johnson. He would appreciate any biographical information or recordings that readers would be willing to submit to him for loan or for sale. John S. Clement, 22 Leyswood Drive, Ilford, Essex is working on a Clark Terry discography. He would like "band titles, personnel and instruments played, location and date of recordings, tunes recorded with matrix numbers if possible, issue numbers of American releases together with any other relevant information pertaining to any recording sessions in which Clark Terry has taken part with the exception of those made with Count Basie's orchestra and sextet and the Duke Ellington band." / In the Notes and Queries section of the July, 1959, Western Folklore, Mimi Clar has a piece, Songs of My California Childhood...Mort Sahl, Copacabana

jazz critic: Said Sahl to John Crosby, "The hard boppers are the group that remind you that the steel mills are still open. Blakey and Miles. All the musicians are going back to post-war bop. It's a hard, cruel sound, volumetrically loud, equated with honesty but mechanically erratic. I'm against it." Miles is a hard bopper like Sahl is a Republican. From a Raymond Horricks interview with Britt Woodman in the Jazz monthly (September): "Duke usually puts the finishing touches to a composition at the actual recording session. This is deliberate, and chiefly because voicings are an important part of his composing. Many of the voicings he uses are based on the very individual sounds produced by members of the Ellington orchestra, and at a recording session he experiments with these sounds until he has the voicings he requires. Often he arrives in the studio with only a melody line and the chords for a composition." Ludvik Sereda, Stalinova 70, Prague 12-- Vinohrady, Czechoslovakia, would like to correspond about jazz. Newly published by Rutgers University Press is D. K. Wilgus' Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship Since 1898. It's written in the prose of the academies, but is the most comprehensive and relatively objective account of the background of folk collecting in this country so far printed. There's a selected discography. Newest paperback discography published by Debut Records, Box 46, Brande, Denmark, is on Lester Young. Iain Lang on Billie Holiday in the London Sunday

Times: "Her wonderful gift for making a trite sentimental song emotionally significant depended largely on audacious displacements of emphasis effective only in relation to a firm rhythmic background. But here [the Columbia, Lady in Satin, with strings], with an accompaniment as firm as melting ice-cream her voice skids precariously over the treacherous surface. Her greatest handicap becomes evident if you compare her with two other singers who made distinguished use of popular material, Bessie Smith and Pastora Pavon. Both worked within well-defined traditional patterns, in Bessie's case the framework of the blues and in that of La Nina de los Peines the established flamenco forms. This gave them a breadth of appeal and an authority that Billie Holiday, dredging up her material from Tin Pan Alley could not command. With each song she had to start from scratch, relying only on her personal emotional and musical resources."

Charles Fox on Ray Charles in the British Gramophone: "The sleeve of this LP... describes him as 'a classical blues singer,' which really is complete nonsense. Charles' technique is that of the gospel singer. (He was, after all, once a member of the Five Blind Boys), a baroque approach which decorates and lingers over the melody, coming closer to the technique of Spanish cante hondo, especially the saeta, than it does to the sinewy directness of the blues."

James Baldwin on the Goldwyn version of Porgy and Bess in Commentary (September): "Billie Holiday would have made a splen-

did if somewhat overwhelming Bess, and indeed, I should imagine that she was much closer to the original, whoever she was, of this portrait than anyone who has ever played or sung it."

Paul Barbarin's story as told to John Norris is in the September Coda. Folk Music Guide USA, edited and published by Israel Young, is a new monthly available at a dollar a year (ten issues) via The Folklore Centre, 110 MacDougal Street, New York 12, N.Y. It contains itineraries of folk singers, concert listings, and features. Sam Charters writes on Moses Asch, head of Folkways Records, in the first issue (October). It's a deserved tribute to the creator of an invaluable company, whose recordings -- unlike most of the others -- will have importance so long as there are means of sound reproduction. Editor Young, in his own section, notes that "Alan Lomax has been touring the South for two months, meeting and talking with people he has worked with over a twenty year span."

For the first time, a blues singer was the subject of a feature article in the Houston Post. Charlotte Phelan did a story on Lightning Hopkins in the August 23 issue. She tells of his spontaneity in making up verses, and adds this anecdote: "Told that Queen Elizabeth II was in Chicago, the minstrel immediately composed Blues for Queen Elizabeth: 'Yeah you know, Baby, the whole world's in a tangle, It's just spinning 'round and 'round...' Chided because he called the Queen of England 'baby', Lightning said, 'I wasn't talking just to her.'"



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MONTEREY OUTSIDE

DICK HADLOCK

Now that jazz festivals are as much part of the American scene as tail-fins and split-level homes, one must learn to distinguish the promotion stunts from sincere productions, the opportunists from patrons of good jazz. Newport, for example, has earned its place at the top of the commercial heap, showing higher non-profits than any other festival, while the modest affair at Long Island's Great South Bay in 1957 was probably close to the bottom in gross receipts. The musical virtues rank in just the reverse order. How far can a producer go, then, toward a thoughtful presentation of good jazz without losing money?

This inverse relationship of dollars to aesthetics was the challenge that faced Jimmy Lyons and his advisors as they planned the initial Monterey Jazz Festival in 1958. That first festival was guided by a cautious recipe of two parts Newport (too many big names rushed on and off) and two parts Monterey (serious compositions and a superb natural setting.) The crowds came, and the critics were interested.

Moving farther out the non-commercial limb in 1959, Lyons and company appointed idealist John Lewis as music boss and began commissioning special works to be written for the festival. Every effort was bent toward making Monterey a "thinking man's festival," even to hiring Woody Herman and a "house" band for several days of rehearsals before the concerts. The formula shifted to three parts Monterey and one part Newport. The traditional parade of name acts, still necessary to draw customers from afar, was at least cushioned by longer sets for each group and a couple of "serious" concerts. Again the crowds came, and the critics smiled.

Friday was, as before, "traditional" night, stomping off with Chris Barber's warm and swinging, if not especially brilliant, jazz band. British musicians, it seems, can play convincingly in the "revivalist" groove, while American traditionalists invariably bog down in a clamor of banjos and tubas.

Following Barber's long but crisp stand, Lizzie Miles sang some threadbare Edwardian favorites. The tireless Miss Miles, hampered by poor accompaniment and the chill night

air, fought a valiant troupier's battle, and most observers thought she won. An unsuccessful George Lewis segment gave way to the best music of the evening—an Earl Hines trio, consisting of Hines, bassist Vernon Alley and drummer Mel Lewis. Although the three were brought together with no preparation, the result was superior jazz as Hines threw his full creative weight into the brief set. When Coleman Hawkins, Roy Eldridge, Ben Webster, Woody Herman, and Urbie Green walked on for a "jam session," though, the musical level established by Hines dropped to a series of reflex choruses that seemed to have each man blowing what he had ready under his fingers rather than creative ideas. Apparently large jazz audiences have not changed much since the early days of JATP, when noise level and contrived excitement were the keys to mass acceptance. Roy Eldridge found at Monterey what tenorman Paul Gonsalves discovered at Newport: that the closer one gets to Rhythm and Blues without actually playing it, the more enthusiastic the audience becomes.

Jimmy Witherspoon also reached the fans in terms they could understand as he sang a set of routine but pleasant blues in a quasi-pop style.

Most of Friday's performers would have been displayed to better advantage in a smaller indoor location. Barber and Lewis might have played more naturally in a dance hall; Lizzie Miles would have enjoyed singing with Barber, preferably in a warm place where she could see her audience; the jam session affair was a mere recitation of musical platitudes because spontaneous improvisation of this sort does not ordinarily thrive on an elevated stage before an open arena and thousands of anonymous faces. If festivals are to be more than outdoor musical reviews, they first must consider what environment will be most stimulating to individual musicians, and then figure out a way to break even financially.

Take Saturday afternoon, for instance. The sparkling Herman band (those rehearsals *did* make a difference) was quite effective on the stage of the open arena, with honors going to Zoot Sims and Al Porcino for solo and section work respec-

tively. Yet, this superb dance band had not a single opportunity to play for dancing. It is questionable whether a hard chair in a cold horse show arena is a better way to enjoy jazz than dancing or even standing about in a ballroom. And it seems doubtful that lofty and remote outdoor stage is a good place to bring out the best in Bill Parkins or Zoot Sims. Big bands *do* get across at festivals because their ability to project a massive wall of sound, propelled by a powerful drummer, pleases the back rows. The fact remains, however, that large arenas are used to make enough money and not primarily for musical reasons.

Because large orchestras and classical ensembles seem to communicate fairly well from outdoor shells, the Saturday afternoon presentation proved successful. J. J. Johnson (*El Camino Real, Sketches*) was the composer of the day, with Benny Golson (*Portrait of Coleman Hawkins*) running a provocative second. Ernie Wilkins' *The Big Three*, written for Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster and Ornette Coleman, was embarrassingly trivial and something of an affront to altoist Coleman, whose talent should not be measured in a Hawkins-Webster-Wilkins context.

Coleman, along with trumpeter Don Cherry, was victimized again, this time by John Lewis, in a composition called *Relays*, which seemed to have little to do with Coleman's unique musical philosophy. In this instance, it would have been best to simply allow Coleman and Cherry to play in their own way with their own men, but that seems not to have occurred to anyone.

What was done to Coleman (and Hawkins and Webster, for that matter) can be understood best by contemplating what a jazz festival in 1937 would have been like if, say, Lester Young were featured in a Raymond Scott *Portrait of Pres* instead of being allowed to blow *Lady Be Good* or *I Got Rhythm* with a first class rhythm section. It is a question of preciousness versus natural artistry. Saturday night, customarily the big drawing card of a weekend festival program, was the weakest of Monterey's five shows. The Herman band blew well, in spite of an unnecessary "Herman Hits of Yesteryear" interlude. Guitarist Charlie Byrd, who played well in the afternoon, seemed crippled by the cold night air. The Modern Jazz Quartet looked like four mechanical dolls as they tossed off their numbers with monotonous

Continued on page 41

MONTEREY INSIDE

GUNTHER SCHULLER

From the outset, it is apparent that this is going to be an unusual jazz festival. There is an air of organization, of intelligent planning and friendliness that one looks for in vain at other such conclaves. There is somehow a real festive atmosphere, an excitement generated by the feeling that perhaps this festival will be more than a weekend of ill-planned jazz bouts with as many names thrown into the ring as possible; that instead one may anticipate some genuine and even special musical pleasures.

Even the setting is different. The scene is the Monterey Fairgrounds, with rustic, log cabin like booths, spacious lawns and grass carpeted fairways, decorously lined with colorful hanging baskets filled with geraniums.

During several days of rehearsals and general preparation, it becomes abundantly clear that this festival will differ from others in many important ways. One of these is the manner of presentation. It has been decided that there should be an absolute minimum of the usual time-consuming m.c.-ing, and much thought has been given to the mechanics of getting the various groups and their instrumental paraphernalia on and off stage. (Anyone who has not been backstage during such a festival, cannot imagine the enormity of this production problem.) It is apparent, too, that the festival directors want to make the physical aspects of these concerts as attractive as possible.

On opening night you are ushered to your seat by attractive young ladies, wearing specially designed bright red capes or shawls, decorated with the emblem of the Monterey Jazz Festival. A scrim all but obscures last minute activity on the stage. There seems to be very little frantic running around and no desperate calls of "Joe, what about the" or "Hey, where's" leaking through the huge speaker systems towering above the stage like oracles. Again careful preparation seems to be the key. Paul Vieregge, the stage manager, has the exact placement of each group and each individual plotted on mimeographed designs of the stage, specially prepared to help organize the constant resetting

of instruments and personnel. Behind the scrim, shadowy figures are now taking their places; while to the left and in front of the stage on a separate platform, six musicians gather about their instruments and microphones. They are a vocal trio, Annie Ross, John Hendricks and Dave Lambert, accompanied by piano, bass and drums; they will introduce each group in short vocalized quatrains. The introduction ends in close harmony (spelling out a ninth chord with the inevitable flatted fifth), and the scrim parts, revealing at attractive stage done in a friendly canary yellow. The three sides of the shell have been decorated with a design consisting of chairs,—all manner of chairs, from old-fashioned spindly wrought-iron chairs to high-backed wicket chaises, sketched lightly in key over the yellow background. One of the chairs in stage has an occupant,—a bird, no less, and the chair next to it, in evident tribute to a great lady of jazz, holds a gardenia.

On stage another six musicians stand before their individual microphones, the latter, widely spaced, in their silver spindliness uncannily continuing the motif of the stage decor. The group begins to play. At a distance of some thirty rows, the effect is almost startling: the music is good, in fact very good, the sound system amplifies without distortion, and for once the visual aspect has been taken into consideration. A healthy start, somehow a truly festive atmosphere of well-being.

The fifty weeks of thoughtful planning that preceded the opening concert are evident everywhere in the three day festival. Even more unusual, patience, courtesy and understanding are the bywords. The musicians backstage are both pleased and surprised. They are treated with respect, warmth and even reverence in a thousand subtle ways they are made to feel that they are more than just useful "names" and exploitable commodities. The festival seems to have something to do with music, of all things, and they feel that they are among friends. Indeed they are—even among highly respected friends. In their wisdom, Jimmy Lyons and Ralph Gleason have taken the unprecedented step of making

one of America's most respected musicians their "musical consultant." And not in name only. John Lewis is consulted about everything, from musical programming and personnel to stage lighting. The musicians are thus playing for one of their own—not a promoter out to make a fast buck. Their music **definitely** reflects their feelings on this subject.

Of course, not everything in so mammoth an operation goes smoothly. One attraction falters badly for lack of rehearsal and planning; another arrives later than expected due to a misunderstanding in last-minute communications; another group performs poorly as a result of sheer exhaustion and overwork. But by and large, the performers rise to the challenge implied by the festival's promised artistic standards. Each group is given its due, and can "stretch out" for anywhere between thirty minutes to an hour, or more. Backstage there is a conspicuous absence of hooks with which to yank performers off the stage after a chorus and a half. The artists get the feel of the acoustics, of the audience, and don't have to worry that an occasional plane from a nearby navy base will obliterate their one and only chance. There is no "one chance"; there is a relaxed, unhurried, uncluttered feeling that flatters both artist and audience.

Much money and time are spent in nearly a week of rehearsing with two separate "workshop" orchestras. For economy, the personnels overlap to some extent. These groups perform the out-of-the-ordinary, more experimental afternoon concerts Saturday and Sunday. To make the occasion more special, truly festive ideas have been planned. Works are commissioned to feature no less than Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster, J. J. Johnson, and two California newcomers, Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry. Under the supervision of John Lewis these workers are rehearsed intelligently and in most cases thoroughly. The result is superb. Coleman Hawkins, rising to the challenge of Benny Golson's extended **Portrait of Coleman Hawkins** outplays even himself. From the first note, his great tone and bursting ideas capture the audience and enthrall fellow musicians (although not some of the critics). Ben Webster is similarly featured, with almost identical results. J. J. Johnson makes a great impression as soloist in two new originals, and surprises audience and musicians alike with his

rare compositional gifts. His **El Camino Real**, played by the workshop orchestra, admirably led by Woody Herman, gets an inspired performance. Two further numbers feature trios of soloists: Ornette, Don and J. J. in a new piece by John Lewis, temporarily entitled **Relays**, featuring—as the title suggests—overlapping solos (an almost rock and roll-like feeling in this piece, incidentally); and later in the program **The Big Three** by Ernie Wilkins, with well integrated solo spots for Hawk, Ben and Ornette, and in the last six bars three separate two-bar breaks that are a precise capsule history of the jazz saxophone, and perhaps of jazz itself. Ornette produces puzzled reactions among the musicians and audience, and some musicians cautiously withhold their opinions.

Sunday afternoon another experimental concert features a workshop orchestra consisting mostly of brass instruments. The program features twelve (!) examples of the new music now gradually evolving out of the reciprocal influence between classical music and jazz. The concert runs the entire gamut from undeniably pure jazz contexts to outright classical music. The players combine the best of Los Angeles' free-lance men, one New Yorker, and a number of San Francisco symphony and free-lance players. The group has rehearsed tenaciously six and seven hours daily, some of the iron-lipped brass men playing in addition other rehearsals and concerts with Woody Herman. The devotion, interest and physical endurance of the players borders on the phenomenal, and the concert is—all things considered—a great success. The festival directors and musicians are very pleased with the warm and understanding reception by the audience for so much new music.

The evening programs are full of surprises, nice surprises mostly; like the superb playing of such divergent artists as Earl Hines, the Chris Barber band from England, Conte Condoli (in a great solo on **Indiana** with Woody's band, and the next day in John Lewis' **Three Little Feelings**), the talented Urbie Green in **Skylark**, and Ray Brown (although his immaculate playing is, of course, no longer a surprise). Hines, I suppose, deserves special mention, since many people, this writer included, had forgotten how remarkable a pianist and showman Hines is,—quite aside from his importance in the development of jazz. His playing is by no means old-fashioned—peo-

ple tend to forget that sixteen years ago Hines had Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie in his band—and is best described as brilliant and sharp. It also makes one suspect that at least two world famous pianists are more than a little indebted to the good fatha."

The Chris Barber band is perhaps the only group that touches off widely divided opinions. Presented as the opening attraction on the "traditional" night, it is inevitably compared to the George Lewis group, also on the program. It is perhaps also inevitable that the New Orleans original will be automatically considered superior to the English copy. In listening to both groups, I cannot arrive at such an evaluation. Where the George Lewis group (that evening without Jim Robinson) sounds rhythmically listless and jogging, coming to life only in the leader's lyrical clarinet weaving. The Chris Barber band plays with a sensitivity, no-nonsense musicianship and rhythmic excitement rarely heard in other groups of this persuasion. In fact, I have not encountered another "revivalist" group (other than Kid Ory's) which does not find it necessary to rely on extra-musical gimmicks for excitement, be it the outlandish costuming and behaviour of several well-known "dixie" groups or the vaudevillian gymnastics of George Lewis' pianist who stands for his solos, playing single finger "mallet" style, with his hand at least two feet off the keyboard between notes (making Rubinstein in his famous **Fire Dance** "act" look like an amateur). The musical results in all such cases are at best questionable.

At any rate, for me the excitement in the Chris Barber band comes wholly and exclusively from the **music**. The rhythm section (bass, drums and banjo) is a joy to hear, swinging with an effortless precision and balance (dynamically as well in terms of timbre), that reminds me of the great Basie rhythm section of the past. Curiously enough, this precision is equated by some with "mechanical." It is hard for me to believe that they really find the spineless, looser (to the point of sloppiness) rhythm of the Lewis band preferable. Frankly, the latter bores me almost immediately, and I find it difficult to see how the soloists can play freely against this rhythmic background. In the Barber band, on the other hand, the relentlessly perfect timing of the three rhythm men leaves the horn soloists free to concentrate exclusively on

their solos, surely a prerequisite for relaxed jazz blowing. Furthermore, I am personally amazed at the freshness (and even originality) with which Barber and his men are able to render music which is, after all, no longer the leading music of our time. It almost tempts one to reconsider the idea that the whole new Orleans revival movement is an anachronism, doomed to eventual extinction by its very nature. The point the Barber band makes for me is that any music, if sincerely and perfectly performed (as in their rendition of **Chimes Blues** or **Rockin' in Rhythm**), can be a joy to the ears. Within the limited concept idealized by Barber, perfection and imagination triumph over the material itself.

Other highlights are the indomitable Lizzie Miles, especially in her native Creole translations; Roy Eldridge, playing with Hawk; both Roy and Hawk joining Ben Webster, Woody, Urbie and Fatha' Hines to provide some excellent accompaniments for the forthright earthy preachings of Jimmy Witherspoon; the Oscar Peterson trio, in excellent form; the Woody Herman-led workshop band, very good in the afternoon, understandably hampered in the evening by the cold Monterey temperatures playing havoc with chops and horns; Sarah, accompanied by the Ronnell Bright trio; and the Ross-Lambert-Hendricks Singers. Aside from their function as the vocal m.c.'s, the latter three have two sets to themselves, one accompanied by the Basie band. With their highly entertaining combination of musicianship and showmanship, they receive what is probably the greatest audience acclaim of the festival, and Ralph Gleason promptly dubs Annie the "Queen of Jazz." Outstanding among the Singers' contributions is a long "pizzicato bass solo" improvised by Jon with astonishing virtuosity. But the trio gets its greatest ovation when Annie Ross, in trying to navigate off the stage through a labyrinth of music stands and microphones without tearing her flouncy dress, lifts the front hem well above her shapely knees.

Regrettably one reports that the Basie band, for whatever reason, has an off night and is in comparatively dull, lackluster form. The "ka-dunk ka-dunk" untogetherness of the bass and drums gets so bad that finally some of the brass men begin to rib the rhythm section. At this point, which coincides more or less with Sonny Payne's circus act, all shreds of musical discipline disappear, and

a rousing good time is had by all. Even more regrettably, the MJQ—a remarkably popular group in the Frisco area—is not at its best, and is further hampered by the only failure of the sound system. Hearing the crystalline transparent textures of the MJQ distorted and amplified to sound like a roaring ten ton truck is a strange sound indeed.

Such incidents are rare exceptions, however, and are easily forgotten amidst the wealth of high-level music making. Judging by the plans for next year, and knowing that Messrs. Lyons, Gleason and Lewis are apt to learn from the experiences gained this year, I would guess that the Monterey Jazz Festival of 1960 will be, like its predecessor in '59, the jazz festival of the year.

MONTEREY Continued

The excellent conga drummer, Mongo Santamaria, saved the night by igniting both the Cal Tjader and Woody Herman groups in a rousing, crowd-pleasing finale.

Sunday afternoon was given largely to classical music composed by John Lewis, Jimmy Giuffre, J. J. Johnson and Gunther Schuller. Johnson again came forth with the most swinging scores (**Turnpike, Poem for Brass**), while Schuller stood with both feet planted firmly in modern formal music. Giuffre's works wandered about in a kind of middle-ground that suggested everything but became nothing more than charming "music to doze in the sun to." In all, a pleasant afternoon.

Sunday night belonged to Lambert, Hendricks, and Ross, who projected their limitless enthusiasm to every last shivering spectator, first with their own trio (Ike Isaacs) and later in front of the entire Count Basie band. Basie's own predictable set and a romping one by Oscar Peterson's trio warmed the air, concluded the evening, and satisfied the customers; many were reluctant to go home.

The 1959 Monterey concerts were, on the whole, artistically and commercially successful. The benevolent hand of John Lewis gave musical purpose to the event; the pre-festival rehearsals paid off handsomely; many musicians felt that this was an event for **them**, a desirable but rare attitude to find in festival participants. However, much more in the way of imaginative production

could have been done to make the Monterey affair an even better **jazz** festival.

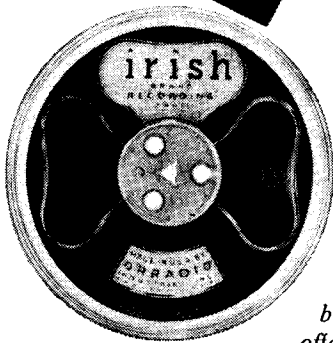
Because Monterey is blessed with handsome grounds and a large number of outbuildings, some thought might be given to setting up several sessions and "workshop" situations that customers could attend according to whim and individual taste. A spacious and acoustically excellent hall could be employed to present bands that perform best before dancers. Young men such as Richie Kamuca, Med Flory, and Don Lanphere might learn directly from veterans like Hawkins and Webster, while older musicians could try their hand at modern jazz. Without sacrificing the excellent written music concerts, more attention could be given to creative improvisation and to providing a setting in which it would flourish. For men like Roy Eldridge, this might mean a small room where jackets are removed and serious blowing is in the air. For some players, to be realistic about it, a place where they can drink between solos is required. Now that jazz is of age and no

longer in need of the phony respectability of the concert stage to bolster its self-esteem, there is little excuse for wasting important talent in a vaudevillian succession of high-priced "acts" presenting tour-tested routines.

The solution lies where promoters are loath to look—in fewer attractions and a reduced budget to permit greater financial flexibility. The number of performers could have been cut in half without adverse musical effect at Monterey, but merchants of the community might have withdrawn some of their support. Any measure that diminishes total attendance is sure to be unpopular in commercial circles. Unfortunately, the desire to push up gross receipts leads only to show-biz tactics and the kind of spiral that caused Newport to become a pointless carnival. The men behind Monterey are fond of jazz and do not want another Newport. With that outlook to build on, Monterey will probably continue to be the most thoughtful of all American jazz festivals; it may, with a little more imagination, even help to shape and direct the future of jazz.



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CONCERT REVIEW

thing the MJQ plays is to its members. There has been a lot of talk since the twenties about classicists having cut themselves off from the dance. Not only in the minuet but throughout this piece, these men were more directly in touch with dancing than half of the jazzmen, including "mainstreamers," now playing in New York. And the complexity of texture that four instruments achieve in their idiom should be a challenge to everybody.

The MJQ finished the evening with a program that somehow seemed overlong. To put second things first, I do not think that the group should play **It Don't Mean A Thing** and **Fontessa** (now the third section of a three-part "**The Comedy**," which is not sustained) on the same program; their similarity is apt to make the latter seem a merely trapped-up version of the former, which it is not. A new piece, **Pyramid** (a gospel-like blues composed by Ray Brown in tribute after a Mahalia Jackson concert) seemed more interesting as performed, however imperfectly, as Music Inn a month earlier. This time the tempo was constant, but the rhythm shifted from parade (impeccable press-rolls from Connie Kay) to church (Connie beautifully suggesting triplet hand clapping). The earlier rhythmic structure involved twice doubling the tempo, then twice halving it again (hence the title) but with no consequent disunity in the structure or emotional flow of the piece. The two themes from **Odds Against Tomorrow** were called **The Capers** and **Cue No. 9**. I had better first repeat my conviction that, although jazz film scoring may give needed work to good musicians, it cannot sustain really creative people nor rally any art, because film scoring by its nature must be a self-effacing craft. It is not my purpose to review the Harry Bellafonte film, but I will remark that it seemed to me a very skillful, very entertaining, essentially trashy thriller, with an either naïf or corrupt moral which I can only interpret to say that race prejudice prevents bank robberies. John Lewis wrote what is in context a frequently superior, ingeniously unified film score; he did not, as in **No Sun In Venice** merely accompany scenes with fragments of Quartet performances.

In concert, the Quartet simply takes the melodies heard in the movie as point-of-departure. As such, they do not seem to me among the best things in the Quartet's book. But at least two of members of the MJQ are surpassing themselves. Connie Kay is becoming (as everyone should know by now) one of the most resourceful and skillful drummers in jazz. And Percy Heath played with a kind of deep personal involvement and imagination. He has always been a sustaining member of the group. That evening, he seemed one of its main creative forces. All of which brings us to the center of the program: the two works for both

groups. Everyone said that John Lewis's **Sketch** was well-titled; actually it was barely a sketch and just a bit more than a trifle. But a very successful trifle and one based on the same kind of eloquently simple melody that his best pieces have. It demonstrated something perhaps learned in that unfortunate encounter with the Stuttgart Orchestra last year, as if Lewis had said, "Very well, these men phrase differently. Can I write a piece in which I do **not** try to make them accent our way, but let them use their idiom while we use ours, and still maintain unity?" The answer seems to be that he could, at least with a sketch. Schuller's piece carried the same principal further.

The first consideration with Gunther Schuller's **Conversations** seems to me not facile talk about "hybrids," because for the very first time in such efforts, one knew that one had heard a real composition, not an attempt but a musical work. I think the secret of its success lies in his having faced frankly and squarely the differences in quality and implicit emotional attitude between the two idioms and made those differences the basis of his piece. Of course, Schuller did not (as have so many composers of pompous "symphonic jazz" nonsense from the 'twenties on) try to recast the most obvious and banal concert hall devices and structures in jazz-y phrases sprinkled with blue notes—nor would he. He is not Morton Gould—nor Graas or Macero. But neither did he (as in his **Transformations**) try to integrate or gradually ally the idioms. He seems to have said, "These musics are different in several ways: they sound different and emotionally they look at things differently; let's meet that difference." To outline this work briefly and with simplifications, he introduced strings (with some exceptionally skillful percussive and harmonic complements from the MJQ) in his own atonal idiom to build gradually to one of the most melodic yet believable pitches of tension I have heard outside of Bartok, to relieve it abruptly by some fairly free and relaxed improvising by the Quartet. Soon, as the MJQ builds its own creative emotions the strings re-enter to re-introduce the tension beneath them, and gradually an interplay brings about a rather John Lewis-like resolution to finish the piece. Faced with a piece of music like this one, I wonder if it is not best to lay aside, at least for the moment, the question of whether or not such things **should** be done. They are obviously going to be done. And that night in Town Hall I had the feeling that for the first time they were being done well. I knew, at least, that the jazz was there honestly and unashamedly as what it is, and its implicit nature was being used creatively. I wanted to know what kind of music such a success would lead to.

Martin Williams

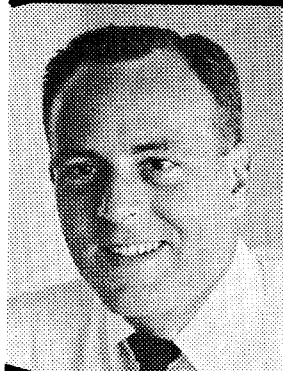
Nice Distinctions at Town Hall:—etc.

The joint Town Hall concert by the Modern Jazz Quartet and The Beaux Arts, one of the country's best string quartets, involved, beside a new work each by John Lewis and Gunther Schuller written for both groups and developments by the MJQ of themes from the new movie score for **Odds Against Tomorrow**, one's early apprehension about just what kind of music that was going to be.

The best way to begin is on the more familiar ground of what each group did separately.

A lovely performance of Haydn's Opus 74, No. 1 by the Beaux Arts Quartet could teach us a lot. We do a lot of talking about group integration and responsiveness; these men live it, musically and visually. We also talk about jazz as the "living" music; this music is as alive to these men as any-

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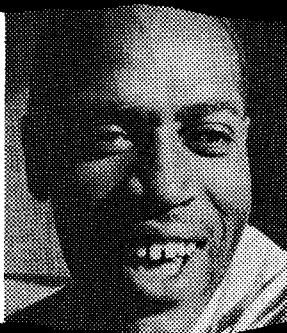
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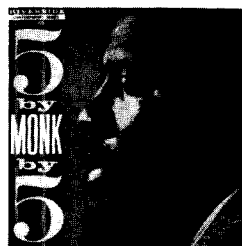
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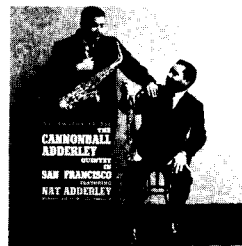
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