

THE JAZZ

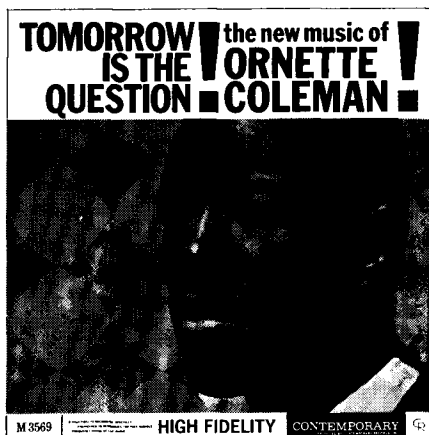
REVIEW

Volume 3 / Number 3 / March-April 1960 / Fifty Cents

Gil Evans
John Lewis
Jas. P. Johnson

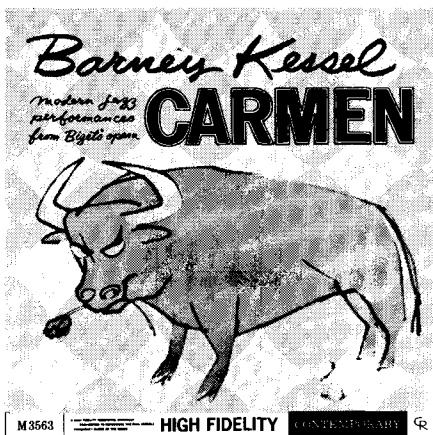
'59

CONTEMPORARY'S year!



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amazed many critics and musicians who believe he may "change the direction of jazz!" For his second CR album Ornette and trumpeter Don Cherry are joined by Shelly Manne, drums; and bassists Percy Heath (Side 1) and Red Mitchell (Side 2). M3569, stereo S7569.



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... and for '60 upcoming albums by Shelly Manne, André Previn, Barney Kessel, Art Pepper, Victor Feldman, Curtis Counce, Hampton Hawes, Helen Humes, Bill Smith and many other top jazz stars! By returning the postpaid card enclosed in any of our albums, you'll receive a free subscription to GTJ & CR News, plus catalogues to keep you posted on new releases.

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LETTERS

SENT FOR YOU YESTERDAY

You have the best magazine in the field, you must know it by now, and you are contributing some very good things to the cause of jazz music. But nevertheless this reader feels that you are not maintaining the critical standards you implied in the first few issues. The most remarkable things in your publication were the record reviews by jazz musicians, and that was and remains the sole reason I purchase your magazine. However, in the last few issues there have been fewer and fewer reviews by musicians and more and more inane comments by people who are not players themselves. Brookmeyer, Bill Crow, Art Farmer, Cannonball, Dick Katz, and all the others are, in my personal opinion, the only ones qualified to speak constructively. There are two and perhaps three exceptions; namely, Zita Carno (who I happen to know is a genius), Martin Williams, and Nat Hentoff. And even the two latter (if you will pardon me) are not really qualified in the sense I am thinking of; however, they obviously do have better-than-average conception, and they can write with an acceptable understanding and sympathy, so I don't mind hearing from them now and then. But let's face it, some of these fellows just don't know what the hell they're talking about. If you want to understand any truly spontaneous experience such as jazz you can only do so by having the same experience yourself. The creative process is not a learned thing, and countless hours of listening will sharpen your ear perhaps but will never make you a creative artist. I don't know whether or not you're aware of it, but there are three levels of listening and appreciation—the layman who hears nothing; the fellow who listens hard and really appreciates in his own limited way; and finally, the

artistic appreciation, the highest level of all and one which few non-artists ever attain. I have been witnessing all three levels in your magazine, and it's irritating. If I want comparisons, and bad ones at that, I can always buy *Metronome* or *Down Beat*.

If the reason you don't have more jazz musicians writing for your magazine is that you don't think there are any who can write, or any who would like to write, you are badly mistaken. I know at least a half dozen who would like to take a crack at it, myself included. If you would only ask them. But you'll have to ask them, they won't come to you. I know, because I won't come to you and I'm a jazz musician. Well, that's about all I have to say. You've a great magazine when the players are writing in it, but when the "journalists" and "reporters" get their two cents in everything goes to hell. I could sign this but I'm not going to, for in a way I feel like an idiot for writing it.

Unsigned

New York City

[We sincerely wish you had signed your name. Our experiences in trying to get musicians to contribute have often been discouraging. We are here when you or any other musicians are ready. Welcome. And thank you.]

THE HEART HAS ITS REASONS

Congratulations on your first birthday. The *Jazz Review* is growing bigger and better, and it looks like you are here to stay. No better jazz periodical has been produced in the U. S., so it seems that no one could take objection to the justly proud but duly modest words you had to say about yourselves; least of all to what seems to be the essence of your anniversary message: "... they (the contributors) too believe that jazz and the men who create it are important enough to be treated with time and care. And hardest of all, with real understanding." Amen, brothers. But now hear this: "His singing is deeply offensive: cynical, unmusical performances based on the cheapest aspects of Louis' vocal style. His playing, while far more pleasant than his singing, leaves me totally unmoved. His technique is inadequate, his pitch is erratic... his vibrato is coarse and clumsy, a relic of what some people in the entertainment business used to think was a hot jazz sound." Why, that's Mr. Maitland Edey talking about Stuff Smith. Such writing represents no "real understanding" of anything, least of all of the purpose and legitimate tools of criticism. And while extreme, this sample of prose is, alas, not unique. It is representative of an attitude which has recently become quite noticeable in *The Jazz Review*, an attitude which could be described as pseudo-Olympian: snobbish, smugly omniscient

and oddly reminiscent of *Time*, the magazine devoid of respect for anything or anyone. Here is some more: "(Edmond Hall) to begin with has nothing that could properly be called an idea, much less an extended and cohesive series of thoughts... It may be that non-musicians with a taste for this period of jazz will find (the album) relaxing, enjoyable listening. It is nothing more." (Guy Waterman, October issue). This learned dissertation begins with some snide comments on Hall's qualifications as a leader and credits "Commodore" with giving him a date as a kind of pat on the head. That this is entirely erroneous is obvious to anyone who looks up Hall in *Feathers'* encyclopaedia, or knows about his distinguished career as a leader, on and off records. But not all your readers are sceptics, or well informed. And those readers are precisely the ones of whom you are responsible.

The point is this: you are respected. You have set yourselves up as the arbiters of standards in jazz criticism. You are uncommitted to advertisers and payola. You have prestige and, ipso facto, authority. Your only business is jazz. Jazz is the *sine qua non* of your being. But you are becoming so concerned with problems of abstract critical and artistic ideals that you are rapidly losing sight of the essential factor in jazz: the living, breathing, working jazz musician who earns his daily bread by performing jazz music, all kinds of music, under all kinds of conditions. Some of us who love jazz find it strange indeed to see our colleagues lost in a desert of dehumanized abstractions. If that is your kick, by all means go ahead. But then you are absolutely obligated to be accurate.

If you must put down Stuff Smith, don't do so by imposing standards upon his playing which are alien to it. His objective happens to be that "hot" sound which Mr. Edey so disdains. Mr. Waterman obviously is unacquainted with Edmond Hall's life and music, which does not give him *carte blanche* to insult the man. Have your facts under control, please. Don't patronize musician or reader. Leave the "extended and cohesive series of thoughts" where they belong, which may be with Sonny Rollins, but not with 16 reissues of 78 recordings. And spare us such illegitimate value-judgements as "deeply offensive" and "cynical". If you know Stuff Smith, you'll know how utterly laughable such assumptions are. I know I can't make you care about such irrelevancies as Stuff's recent serious illness and his determined attempt to make a comeback against many odds. But one can expect fairness. Ed Hall's forty years of solid, dependable professional musicianship are in and of themselves worthy of respect, regardless of indi-

vidual taste. If you don't feel any kinship with a performance, let someone else review the record, or at least state your position clearly. Personal opinion disguised as "scientific" objectivity has done enough harm in our century.

Further brief quotes: "And Armstrong and Gillespie are interesting musically, sometimes despite their vaudeville." (Martin Williams; no comment.) "John Letman, an unimaginative edition of some of Roy Eldridge's less successful work." (Maitland Edey's dismissal of a deserving and competent musician on the basis of a few brief solos on one recording. How about at least modifying with something like "on the basis of this performance"? "... such terrors as Buck Clayton also trying to play Dixieland." (Martin Williams.) Buck is currently playing for a living at Condon's, and doing very nicely, thank you, with no terrors in evidence. Enough said. Such pronouncements may have an effect on a musician's livelihood. That is why it is important to think a little before making them. You are not much fairer to your own. Sheldon Meyer's mis-labeled article about some jazz books published in the U. S. between 1935 and 1955, *The Story of Jazz Books in America, 1935-55*, leaves out, among others, Finkelstein's *Jazz: A People's Music*, *The Jazz Record Book* and *Frontiers of Jazz*; it dismisses *Really the Blues* in one paragraph and contains this gem: "(Panassie, Goffin and Ferguson were) a superior kind of jazz fan, and it is to their credit that they aroused interest in the serious study of jazz." Won't you get off it, please—as Fats Waller put it. A man who has devoted his entire life and resources to jazz and it's creators is more than just a fan, whatever you may think of his opinions. Otis Ferguson was quite a writer, better than any *The Jazz Review* has yet come up with. And who is Mr. Meyer?

I do not advocate uncritical acceptance of every musician who can blow Note One. I only ask for perspective, respect, a little humility and above all, involvement. After all, if you write about jazz you must have a conviction that it is worthy of time and attention. And of a little love. In criticism as in medicine, dissecting is only the foundation for mending and joining, and it is not performed on the living organism. Keep in mind that we are servants, not judges. The best of luck and a long life to *The Jazz Review*.

Dan Morgenstern
New York City

The publication of this letter gives us an occasion to clarify certain feelings and intentions we have about *The Jazz Review*.

There is a distinction between judging

as if one were morally superior and judging from the knowledge that one is not, and that is a moral lesson we all need to learn.

However, enthusiasm is no protection against smugness, even when that enthusiasm is delivered with "style". A great deal of enthusiastic writing on jazz from the 'thirties and 'forties seems to me not only uninformative but, under the surface, patronizing about jazz and jazzmen. It is easy to mistake an infatuated possessiveness for love in these matters. Possessiveness can kill. And how much can one love what one little understands? Having withstood so much enthusiasm, jazz, I feel sure, can withstand onslaughts in print in which enthusiasm is complemented by musical ears, human intelligence, and critical preception as well. When *The Jazz Review* can find such writing, it publishes it. Finally, a point which I do not think is so incidental as it sounds. As I believe my context made clear, it was out of an awesome admiration for what Buck Clayton can do so beautifully that I said what I did of his Dixieland playing on that record. I believe that to have done otherwise would have been implicitly insulting to the real value of his talent. In any case, silence about it would seem to me no way to help find an audience for whom he could fulfill the best that is in him.

Martin Williams

I don't think any writer for this monthly is consciously aiming at making criticism synonymous with "dehumanized abstractions." I do think that all of us are occasionally inconsistent in setting criteria for criticism and then in fulfilling those definitions. I also think Don Morgenstern is, in his letter, inconsistent.

For example: I agree with him that to call Stuff Smith's vocalizing "cynical" requires more "proof" (as it appears to the reviewer) than Mait Edey supplied. But does Morgenstern maintain that talking about a performer's technique, pitch and vibrato is outside the field of criticism? He can disagree with Edey, and he may win if he has a better ear, but Edey is certainly within his rights as a critic to describe what he hears. Similarly, although I happen to agree with Morgenstern that Ed Hall is an important musician, Waterman is within his rights to say, according to his standards, that Hall's conception is seriously lacking. This is not ad hominem or dehumanized criticism by any means.

Morgenstern finds Martin Williams' statement that "Armstrong and Gillespie are interesting musically, sometimes despite their vaudeville" beyond comment. Yet, whatever position one takes, an element of vaudeville does often exist in the work of both men

and is a legitimate topic for discussion. As for Buck Clayton and Dixieland, since Morgenstern is placing so high a premium on knowing the musician personally, he might ask Buck—though he might not get a straight answer—whether Buck enjoys playing Dixieland and whether Buck himself considers Dixieland his forte. If (and I think this is Martin's thesis) Buck plays Dixieland on occasion on records and in clubs primarily to stay alive economically, one can sympathize with the need, but no critic can substitute understanding of economic motivations for musical judgement.

The essential misunderstanding of criticism in Morgenstern's letter is the appalling sentence: "Such pronouncements may have an effect on a musician's livelihood." A critic's primary responsibility is to his readers, and he meets this responsibility by telling them exactly what he hears. If he is to temper his judgements for fear of causing economic hardship, he becomes not a critic but a press agent. The effect of criticism on a musician's livelihood has absolutely no bearing on how a critic should function. The critic's job as a critic is to write about the music. He becomes patronizing to the musician and dishonest with himself and his audience if he allows non-musical considerations to affect his judgement.

I agree that the books Morgenstern cites deserve inclusion in any article on jazz book publishing in America, but I think it absurd to overlook the fact that Panassie, Goffin and Ferguson were not critics. Panassie is exceptionally useful in his knowledge of blues singers and instrumentalists and his background in the swing era; but the only times he comes close to criticism are in his discussions of blues records. There too, he is more the informed amateur than a critic in the sense in which our reviewers try to function. Peripherally, I do not agree that Ferguson was quite the remarkable prose stylist he is claimed to have been. He was often brilliantly evocative, but he was also often sentimental and, unwittingly, quite patronizing to the musicians.

Certainly love must be part of any aspect of criticism, but infatuation is not love, and the more one understands what one loves, the more honest and giving that love is. Too much of the past and a considerable amount of the present writing on jazz reflects a "crush", hardly a love affair. Interestingly, it is usually those who are in love with love in the abstract who regard themselves as "servants" of the beloved. You act like a servant to a girl, my friend, and she'll leave you for someone who can give her a stronger feeling of self-respect and of being realistically accepted — not served.

Nat Hentoff

JAZZ THE REVIEW

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 3 MARCH-APRIL 1960

- 6 An Afternoon with John Lewis
by Francis Thorne
- 11 Conversations with James P. Johnson, Part V
by Tom Davin
- 14 Gil Evans on his Own
by Don Heckman
- 18 Introducing Ray Bryant
by Nat Hentoff
- 20 The Blues

RECORD REVIEWS

- 21 Ray Charles by H. A. Woodfin
- 22 Vic Dickenson and Joe Thomas
by Harvey Pekar and Louis Levy
- 23 Snooks Eaglin by LeRoi Jones
- 24 Duke Ellington-Johnny Hodges by Max Harrison
- 25 Red Garland by Mait Edey
- 25 Stan Getz by Harvey Pekar
- 26 Dizzy Gillespie by Mait Edey
- 26 Benny Green by I. W. Stone
- 26 Howlin' Wolf by H. A. Woodfin
- 27 Steve Lacy by Larry Gushes
- 28 Dave McKenna by Bill Crow
- 28 Anita O'Day by Ray Gandolph
- 29 Buddy Rich-Max Roach by Max Harrison
- 29 Horace Silver by Mait Edey
- 30 Zoot Sims by Michael James
- 30 T-Bone Walker by Dick Weissman
- 30 Phineas Newborn and Evans Bradshaw by Mait Edey
- 31 Big Band Recreations by Stanley Dance

BOOK REVIEWS

- 32 Martin Williams' *The Art of Jazz* by Gunther Schuller
- 33 Marshall Stearns' *The Story of Jazz* by Marion Gushee
- 34 Garson Kanin's *Blow Up a Storm* by Orrin Keepnews
- 36 Jazz in Print by Nat Hentoff
- 39 The Word Jazz by Fradley Garner and Alan P. Merriam
- 41 Reconsiderations Jimmy Yancey by Max Harrison

Co-editors: Nat Hentoff
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Advertising Manager: Hank Leonardo

The Jazz Review is published monthly
by The Jazz Review Inc., 124 White St.,
N. Y. 13. N. Y. Entire contents copy-
right 1960 by The Jazz Review Inc.

Israel Young and Leonard Feldman were
among the founders of the Jazz Review.
Price per copy 50c. One year's subscription
\$5.00. Two year's subscription \$9.00.
Unsolicited manuscripts and illustrations
should be accompanied by a stamped, self-
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bility for unsolicited material.

NEW CONTRIBUTORS

Ray Gandolph is an actor who has
followed jazz since Chicago in the
'forties.

Marion Gushee comes to jazz fresh
from the classics by way of marriage
to Larry Gushee. She studies music at
Yale University.

I. W. Stone is a long-time follower of
the jazz scene who was involved in the
production of Bunk Johnson's later
recordings.

Dick Weissman is a singer and guitar-
ist who specializes in the blues.

An Afternoon with John Lewis

Francis Thorne

This conversation between John Lewis, Francis Thorne and Luciano Catalani, the editor of the Italian magazine JAZZ de OGGI e IERI, took place in Fiescole during the summer of 1959. It appeared in an Italian translation in that journal, and this original English version is published with its permission.

To begin, would you tell us about the origin of the Modern Jazz Quartet and how it came to be formed? The formation of the group has little to do with what it is today. At the beginning, it was a recording group that Milt wanted to use for some records for Dizzy Gillespie's Dee Gee label. The original drummer was Kenny Clarke and the bass player was Ray Brown. From that time, we knew how nice the music felt, and how easy it was to play together. Of course it should have been easy; we had played together for two years with Dizzy's band, which didn't have too many arrangements. The trumpet players' music was particularly difficult in that band, and they needed a lot of rest. The rhythm section played quite a lot as relief, and it also gave Milt a chance to play, as he didn't have much chance to do with the band, except for a few solos. We were all working for others when we started, and there was a serious problem about more recording work, because Milt was



the leader and could not then afford to pay the others, but we hit on the idea of making the group cooperative so that no one was the leader. This condition still exists, and though it is not perfect, it has worked quite well for a long time.

I am grateful to have had the responsibility for the musical direction, as it was a responsibility that I wanted, and that I had when I was with Dizzy's band. There were a lot of things wrong in that band that I would have loved to help with at the time, but I didn't have the equipment and the training then. I talked with Dizzy about the problems, but it wasn't until later, when I found out many things in music school, that I began to know the answers to these problems. So now they apply to the MJQ.

I have noticed quite a few examples of your adding a horn to the quartet, including Jimmy Guiffe, Sonny Rollins and Ronnie Ross. Have you ever been tempted to add a permanent horn to the group?

No. For me, the perfect number of instruments to use for this kind of music, that is for music based on European harmonies, is three or four. After this number, you can no longer deal so well with the independent parts. And for me, the best jazz-making is usually creating independent parts. So actually, with this number, it is enough. If you notice, when there is another instrument playing with our group, one of us is not playing. But with the quartet as it is, we all play most of the time, and this is the basis of our playing.

I don't recall many instances where two of you play alone, and very few where there are just three, like in Cortège, where you do not play for so long a time. Do you plan to do more playing than you have done in the past, with one or two of you dropping out?

It depends on the music; if the music permits, then O. K. Recently, in San Francisco at the Blackhawk, we played two sets out of a total of five in trio form. One was Milt with Connie and Percy, and the other was myself with Connie and Percy. The evening had more contrast this way, and we liked it.

I'm interested in hearing about your experiences working with symphonic instrumentation, how it integrated with the quartet, and whether you think this is an approach which is valid, and is leading to a further fusing of jazz and symphonic music.

My only real experience was writing and orchestrating music that had been written for the MJQ originally. It was a traditional European Symphonic orchestra, members of the Stuttgart Orchestra, and we recorded the lp called **European Windows**. This was fun to do, and for me was a chance to use training and experience that I had received in school. There was no experimenting and not too much personal use of the instruments, as there is in my writing for Milt.

The great increase in orchestras in the U. S. and in Europe has had me thinking a lot about this great medium of expression. This magnificent instrument, the orchestra has not been used at all with jazz for many valid reasons. There have not been enough practical and compelling reasons to cause it. The jazz orchestra came

out of practical needs, and the availability of brass and saxophones to people who wanted to play jazz. Not the string instruments. And also these are very soft, and as you know, jazz was used in places where it was very noisy. There were a few, like Eddie South and others, but so far it has not been too successful. Now that jazz has become more a music to be listened to, I think there is a possibility of using the symphony orchestra in connection with jazz. After all, the instrumentation is pretty standard and much more varied than the brass and reed groups. I hope that interest will increase among jazz composers to do this kind of writing. We have about five or six things now with the quartet that are written to be accompanied by a symphonic orchestra.

What do you think are the most attractive circumstances under which you can play?

Conditions like those at the Pergola (Where the MJQ played as the first jazz group to be featured in the annual Musical May Festival of Florence in its twenty-two years of existence), and in Rome we played in a wonderful theater called the Quirinal, and in Bologna at the Comunale. Those halls were designed for intimate performances by small ensembles, and there is real contact with the audience. It was a revelation.

Would you go further and say that a concert setting is the best kind for your group?

It's not the only setting, and I would not want to do just concerts. When I say the concert setting is the best, I mean that we usually achieve peak performances at a good concert. But in order for us to achieve this point of high level performance, it's very good for us to play in places like the Blackhawk in San Francisco. It's very difficult to find good clubs in the U. S., and we are obliged to think and play in a very different way—for example, when we have to play five times in an evening, and where the audience has a much lower level of concentration. Last night was the biggest kind of challenge. When the building and the audience are just right, and the piano is just right, and we are right, then is the most rewarding experience, for us, and I hope also for the audience.

What do you think is the future of atonal or twelve-tone music within the jazz context? Will this have any interest for you, do you think, in the future?

Well. I'd say yes. Someone would have to find a way to use these materials well and right, so that something comes out well balanced, so that the listener is able to receive something, not only the players and musicians. So far nothing has shown up along these lines that is anywhere near perfect, but I'm quite sure something will. **Have you and Milt Jackson done any experimenting in getting away from tonality?**

In improvisation? No. I hope we will someday. We still have many other things to accomplish within the framework of tonality. Some of the music we've played, **Vendome** for instance, was very unnatural when we started playing. On the record it is not natural at all. Now it has become natural, but it has taken a long time. **Concorde** was better in that it had a more in-

herent rhythmic feeling of jazz, and even **Concorde** took time to find its correct rhythmic feeling, but now it's very good, sometimes. The other things we have tried to do, beside getting more natural feeling for the fugal things, include trying to use motives or melodic development in a more economical way without sacrificing any of the freedom or spontaneity that you have when you're not basing your improvisations on melodic content, but on the chord changes. There are many other things we are working on.

In your own composing have you been searching consciously for any types of forms, new or old?

I never have a conscious searching for form; I believe that my composing is just a natural music-making. Perhaps years ago I started a composition with a form in mind and then tried to write the music, but it is a long time since I have done this.

When you wrote *CORTEGE* for the film *NO SUN IN VENICE* were you definitely planning a funeral march?

In this case it was not so much a matter of form but the fact that people asked for a piece that was similar to *Django*. Actually, that was the main reason the producers of the film wanted music from me in the first place; it was *Django* that gave them the idea to use me for the background score.

Which do you prefer, and which comes easier to you, writing just pure music or writing programatic music or music with a preconceived idea behind it, like movie music?

To me it comes much easier to write music in the abstract sense. When writing music, say, for a film there are a number of extra factors to be taken into consideration. However, with the movie *Odds Against Tomorrow*, that I have been working on for producer Robert Wise (and he is wise, by the way), he has been so good to work with that this job has been easier than I had expected. He knows the business of movie making so well; he has been a cutter for a long time, and he has worked with all the people in Hollywood who write movie music. At the very beginning of the making of the film, we had long talks together as to what he thought he wanted the music to be. Then he forced me to make suggestions about many aspects of the film. Therefore, getting the musical ideas together was easier because this had been going on for over six months already. He wouldn't let me write any music, though.

How would you describe a typical cue for creating a section of music?

Well, a cue is simply so many minutes of music. You are given dialogue in a scene, where it starts and where it ends. Once I understand what the scene is all about I can write whatever I want. Sometimes, when the scene has little dialogue, the commentary must come from the music. Actually, I had ideas right at the beginning, but these have changed about ten times, because the conception of the movie has changed a number of times. The first time I actually saw the film, I was not too happy about it. The next time it had been changed completely, and I felt that I did not want to finish the job,

but then I had promised . . . and then, as it progressed it got better and better and I became enthusiastic about it.

Do you think that the Jazz Festivals in America are a developing and growing thing or a passing craze?

Well, I think that it is a developing thing and very good because here we've actually been able to create a new type of festival which comes from the United States, basically speaking, and that's very good. However, there have been a few misconceptions about festivals. When they were small, and they have usually started off small, then they worked well. But when they got bigger and more complicated, they still tried basically to operate them as concerts, and to me a Festival is not a concert and it shouldn't be that way. You can't expect people to be attentive and react in the same way as at concerts. The music should be planned accordingly, and everything else, too. Our quartet is really not equipped to play festivals. Our music has been made either for night clubs or concerts.

If we consider that the 1940's brought a kind of revolution to jazz, do you sense any coming revolution and, if so, have you any feeling as to where it might come from?

No, I don't feel anything particularly just now. Do you know, this revolution or whatever you want to call it, in jazz in the 1940's took place for many reasons, and not only for musical reasons. I think it took place for social and sociological reasons, more specifically. Although the music of Dizzy and Charlie Parker was a reaction to what Louis Armstrong and older people had achieved (there was little more to do in that style), there was, more importantly, a reaction to an attitude—servility, Uncle Tomism and all that kind of thing. For the younger musicians this was the way to react against the attitude that Negroes were supposed to entertain people. The new attitude of these young Negroes was: "either you listen to me on the basis of what I actually do, or forget it." Therefore, the need for this music. It really started before 1940 with Basie and Lester.

You don't feel in the jazz world today that there are conditions that might lead to a reactionary group? Can you feel a protest in the young men coming up today?

No major thing like what happened in the 1940's.

Nothing really elemental?

Not that strong. However, I can tell you this . . . there are two young people I met in California—an alto player named Ornette Coleman and a trumpet player named Don Cherry. I've never heard anything like them before. Ornette is the driving force of the two. They're almost like twins; they play together like I've never heard anybody play together. It's not like any ensemble that I have ever heard, and I can't figure out what it's all about yet. Ornette is, in a sense, an extension of Charlie Parker and the first I've heard. This is the real need that I think has to take place, to extend the basic ideas of Bird until they are not playing an imitation but actually something new. I think that they may have come up with something, not perfect yet, and still in the early stages but nevertheless very fresh and interesting.



Phil Featheringill

Conversations with **J P J ***

* James P. Johnson

Tom Davin

Which was considered the best Negro band in New York in 1917?

Ford Dabney had the best Negro band in New York at that time. It played at the Ziegfeld Roof and was made up of sixteen musicians who played straight Broadway music, pops and show tunes. Dabney got the job there through Jim Europe.

One of Dabney's men, Allie Ross, a pianist and violinist, was one of our early ambitious musicians. He wanted to be a leader of ability and studied theory and harmony with E. Aldema Jackson, a juilliard graduate, organist and music theory teacher.

Allie later became a conductor for Lew Leslie; he rehearsed the orchestra for W. C. Handy's "The Blues" and later trained Fletcher Henderson's first orchestra, that opened at Club Alabam on Broadway.

Allie was a very serious musician and was a good friend of mine. He was one of the first to recognize my talent, and one of his ambitions was to transcribe some of my piano pieces for chamber orchestra; but he never got around to it.

Harlem, as we know it, was coming into being just before World War I as more and more Negroes came north for jobs in factories and shipyards around New York. What were some of the earliest jazz centers in those days—the late teens?

Yes, Harlem was starting to grow then. One of the great hangouts for musicians was a place called The Rock—some people called it The Garden of Joy. Anyway, it was located on top of a big shelf of rock in a vacant lot at 140th St., and Seventh Avenue, where Adam Powell's church and the Mt. Zion apartments stand now.

On the top of this rock, a man built a summer house with a dance floor and a kitchen. It was all hung with Japanese lanterns and looked like a summer resort in the middle of the city. There was always a breeze from the Heights or from the Harlem River below. Some of the best musicians in Harlem used to relax there.

On weekends, the dictys would hold their socials, but on weekdays us musicians had it to ourselves. Piano players would come up there to improvise and show off their

latest riffs afternoons and evenings; lots of small bands (many of them became famous outfits later) worked out their arrangements on The Rock, or sat in with us piano players developing new music. It was a lively little musical mountain, visited by all the talent in Harlem.

Willie 'the Lion' Smith, Fats Waller, Willie Gant and myself hung out there regularly, knocking each other out with rags, stomps, shouts and every wild chorus and freakish break we could think of. It was an odd place for an academy of music, but very relaxing; and there was always an intelligent and appreciative audience to follow us.

A short time later, on the 139th Street side of this vacant lot, a little cabaret called The Livia was built. All the rising girl singers visited it—Ethel Waters, Bessie Smith, Florence Mills, Gertrude Saunders, Adelaide Hall and Martha Copeland, among dozens of others. It was a favorite place to catch the latest blues and ballads, for the artists passing through would give out without too much coaxing.

The Livia used to get a lot of good little bands, too, and fine accompanists who were trained by playing for the great variety of singers that came there.

I remember that Johnnie Dunn, a disciple of Joe Oliver, played his trumpet there. In Memphis or Chicago he had heard the King and copied all his effects. Seven years later, Joe Oliver himself came to New York but his style of playing had already been established here and had been widely imitated from its early introduction by Johnnie Dunn.

On 139th Street, right below The Rock was another jazz joint, The 101 Ranch, where wild little bands sounded off, defying all musical convention. They played without written music, never bothered with arrangements, orthodox modulations or harmonies, but just let go with natural blues, hot stomps and all sorts of wild rhythms and sounds that popped into their heads and right out through their instruments without the benefit of formalities. These original bands reminded me of the music we used to hear in The Hole In The Wall on 135th Street, which was another early and original well of unrestricted hot music.

We used to drop into The 101 Ranch with a small bottle, order a bottle of soda or a pitcher of ice water and sop up some of this primitive sound. It would rest our ears after working on complicated head arrangements.

For fancy piano, we would drop into some place where Willie 'the Lion' Smith was playing **The Sheik of Araby** or **Moonlight** with elaborate concert-style introductions based on Schubert's **Marche Militaire**. That was considered very sophisticated in those days as we liked people to know that we could play the classics, too. I used to like to rip off a ringing concert-style opening using Liszt's **Rigoletto Paraphrase for Piano** that was full of fireworks in the classical manner and then abruptly slide into a solid, groovy stomp to wake up the audience and get a laugh. Donald Lambert, who plays out in Jersey now, still does those classical bits on Grieg, Massenet and Beethoven's **Moonlight Sonata**. They used to be in every

tickler's repertory in the early days, but few do them now. Lambert made some great records for Bluebird back in the early 'twenties using these classical concert themes. He used to study me a lot.

Another tickler, Mike Jackson, now dead, came to play at Barron Wilkins' from St. Louis and Louisville. His **Chinese Blues** was very popular. It was in D Minor and he used a muffled bass drum with it for oriental effect. When vamping, he did an imitation Chinese monologue, and then he'd go into a natural blues (like **All Night Long**) with words that compared the troubles of the Chinese and the Negroes. Pace & Handy published it. Then we got into the war, and all the open cabarets turned into dance halls when prohibition came along.

What did you do during the World War I years?

I tried to keep out of it mostly. I wasn't a fighter like Willie Smith. He got in the army and made one of the fightingest records of any soldier in that war; he was decorated and everything. That's when he got the nickname 'The Lion.' He was always a fighter; and he fought a lot of my battles over the years. I remember the first thing he ever said to me when I met him and played after him on The Coast over in Newark. He said: "Well, you may be able to play better than I can, but I'll bet I can beat you fightin'." And he's still got his pep and attitude to the present day. Nobody ever put anything over on Willie and got away with it.

In that war, you had to carry a draft card with you all the time. They used to have raids, and if you didn't have your card, it was the end. One night, when I didn't have my card on me, I was in a place when the MPs raided. I knew what it meant, so I just jumped out a window; it was only on the second floor.

I knew I had to get a war job or be drafted, so I got one in the Quartermaster Corps warehouse at 6th Avenue and 38th Street. The officers and soldiers uniforms were kept there. I pushed a 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ ton hand truck that really needed two men.

After work, I would go out to the cabarets and play late and then get up early to scuffle with the hand truck. I used to go into the toilet and get a little rest when I could. After awhile, I was moved to an easier job on the second floor of the warehouse, but I quit a few weeks after that. The war was over.

A funny thing happened during that year. Before I got that job, I was expecting to be drafted any minute, but nothing happened. Later I found out that the three Army doctors who had examined me one after the other had died in the big influenza epidemic that broke out—and by the time they got my records straightened out, the whole war was over.

What did you do after Armistice Day, 1918?

I went first to playing for records. Happy Rowan was in all the combos, but I took charge. At that time the violinist was usually the leader of the band, but I put the piano in the lead.

Then we went to playing Clef Club gigs, which might use anywhere from a trio to forty men in the band. In those days the Clef Club used to give big concerts in which

all the good musicians played. I was ambitious to conduct one of these concerts and worked hard at it. But I didn't get it, and it broke my heart. I quit the Clef Club and returned to rehearsing my own group.

We began to use new effects, like having a xylophone solo for the fast breaks, and copied the Dixieland style to get attention.

During this time, I wrote **After Hours**—a good instrumental that had a blues in the last strain with a slow, sobbing end that was muffled. It used to break up dance hall audiences.

I took it to Columbia Records, but it didn't go. Victor Records also turned it down. Harry Pace had formed the Black Swan Record Company that made the first successful colored record with Ethel Waters' **Go Back Where You Stayed Last Night** and **Georgia Blues**. He gave me a chance to back singers with my combos. I made a solo, **Harlem Strut**, for Black Swan and some commercial songs, too.

We'd play anywhere for small dough to keep busy, and go around to dancing classes in the afternoon.

Then I got a break and was offered a road job playing with a "Smart Set" show on the road—one week in Philly, one and a half weeks in Wilmington, Baltimore. Norfolk and Atlanta.

We played first in the Standard Theatre in Philadelphia, which was a haven for colored performers. It was run by a Negro, John T. Gibson. The director of the orchestra there at the time was Benton Overstreet, a fine musician and arranger. He was the composer of **There'll Be Some Changes Made**. He never lived to hear it become famous. In the Philadelphia Dancing Class, a lively girl named Ethel Waters from Chester, Pa. had made quite a hit. She wasn't pretty, but she had a lively, funny personality and was a great comic dancer. She was entertaining at Edmund Johnson's place when I got back to New York—but I'll have to tell you of some things that happened on that road trip south.

After Philadelphia, we played Wilmington and Baltimore. The next stop was Norfolk, so we took the Chesapeake Bay boat and relaxed . . . a little bit too much. I had a few drinks and dozed off. When I woke up, I found that somebody had taken all my money and my collar buttons, which were gold. Others had been robbed, too, by the lush-rollers. We wouldn't have a cent when we got to Norfolk.

There was a piano on the boat, so I sat down and started to play, and my wife, who was with me, began to sing and dance. Pretty soon money started dropping. When the boat tied up, we had enough to eat in Norfolk.

In Atlanta with the same "Smart Set" show, we played at the 81 Theatre on Carter St. At 91 the Bessie Smith Trio was singing. Since there was still a wartime atmosphere, they were singing **Liberty Bells** and when they came to the end of the chorus about the Liberty Bells ringing out victory, they used to turn around and waggle their plump butts in time to the bell ringing. It was a knockout effect.

Later I went to a party in Atlanta where Bessie was, and

I played behind her in her **Alcoholic Blues**, improvising the accompaniment. This wasn't so hard because all true blues are the same form. Every natural blues has: 4 bars opening in tonic/2 bars to subdominant/2 bars back to tonic/2 bars to dominant/2 bars ending in tonic.

To be a real blues it must follow that plan.

At 91 Carter St., Eddie Heywood Sr. played regularly, although he was laying off when I was there. He was a great blues player and was known as "The Ragtime King of the South." I wish I had been able to hear him. His son is a fine player and arranger now; Eddie Heywood, Jr. During the same trip, I got out to Toledo, Ohio where I heard Johnny Waters who played 'Western' piano. He taught his tricks to Roy Bargy, who was later pianist in Paul Whiteman's orchestra. Waters was a fine, natural piano player who had a pint of whisky every morning for breakfast. He did slow blues with tenths—**When The Cold, Cold Winds, Easy Ride, All That I Had Is Gone, Walkin' The Dog**, etc. Handy was becoming popular then. When I was in Toledo, I studied composition with Jan Chiapuse who was at the Toledo Conservatory. He was a Paris Conservatory graduate. All the time, I was playing in a club called The Lion's Jaw. Art Tatum later told me that he caught me there and studied my style. He was about 14 then.

When did you get back to New York?

Oh, about the end of 1919. When we got back, I picked up some short money playing gigs and Clef Club fast calls. I dropped into Edmund Johnson's place at 132nd Street and Fifth Avenue. It was a black-and-tan place with singing waiters and that lively girl from the Philadelphia Dancing Class, Ethel Waters. Ethel was making her first big hit in New York singing songs like:

If You Go Away and Come Back and Somebody Has Taken Your Place—Don't Get Mad; . . . All Night Long, a blues based on a current riff that was going around; . . . **The Blues**—with no special tune and with words she made up herself.

She also used to sing my **Stop It, Joe!** and I would play behind her. She was a great comic singer—the greatest, in fact. I made records with her later.

Also at Johnson's were Mattie Hite, one of the greatest cabaret singers of all time and Josephine Stevens, a coloratura, who was able to hold a note while the rhythm strode through and then pick up the rhythm without a break—a terrific effect.

Another interesting place in 1920 was Small's Sugar Cane Club, a cellar club located on the southwest corner of 135th Street, and Fifth Avenue. It was the first Harlem night club to become popular with whites from downtown; the first of the big black-and-tan clubs, like The Cotton Club and Connie's were to become later.

It was Charlie Small's first place and the room where he made all his money. Charlie came from South Carolina, and most of his help were from that state, too. Many of them came from the Jungles, where I first played at Allen's and Georgie Lee's, since that neighborhood was full of South Carolinians. It was near the Ward Line docks whose boats ran to Charleston and other southern ports.

Most of them were dock workers for the line.

One of the attractions at The Sugar Cane was the jive of the waiters, who sang, danced and carried on a separate sideshow of their own while they took care of the customers between the regular floor shows. Each waiter served drinks or set-ups to his tables with an original strut, shuffle or tap, and then they'd cut away with a heel pivot and dip, spinning their empty trays over their heads like jugglers.

Those Small's waiters sang, too—solos and quartets, or if a shout refrain was indicated, they all joined in to make the room ring.

One of them was called 'Whistling Seath' because he could whistle beautiful blues through his teeth with a fine mellow tone, giving as fine an effect as any voice or instrument. He was a very popular and attractive character and had a solid following, not only at The Sugar Cane, but all over Harlem.

At that time all good colored performers played at the Lincoln Theatre, which was to Harlem what The Palace was to Broadway or The Standard to Philadelphia. The Lincoln Theatre was the big, handsome successor to The Crescent, that little hole in the wall on 135th Street, where Harlem stage entertainment was born.

As in all popular theatres, the gallery gods decided the fate of the performers. Some entertainers called The Lincoln "The Temple of Ignorance" because of the audience's preference for old-fashioned natural blues rather than the more artificial songs and ballads of Tin Pan Alley.

'Whistling Seath' from Small's was a regular attendant at The Lincoln, and when a performer sang or played a blues, 'Whistling Seath' would join in with his mellow whistle. The audience liked it, and most performers did, or seemed to. If he whistled behind you, it was a mark of acceptance, of success. You were in and had the house with you. He was part of a group known as Pimp's Gang who acted like the permanent rulers of the Lincoln's balcony and led the applause like the claquees they have at the Opera downtown. Some artists used to entertain these fellows with liquor and food on the outside because they were influential, and their reaction in the audience could make you or break you.

When this gallery gang yelled: "Put us in the alley!" that was the signal for the entertainer on the stage to go into a low-down blues. Every piano player knew what to do. First, he hit the classical "blues announcement" with its familiar figure—and the audience squealed with anticipation. Then the musicians went into the groove with 'Whistling Seath' singing like a bird in the gallery. Everybody had a fine time. When you went "down the alley" at The Lincoln, you could be sure of a week and a return engagement.

Later on, Fats Waller got the same effect there playing the organ behind 'Whistling Seath' during movies.

(The next **Conversation** will start with James P. Johnson's player piano rolls for Q.R.S. in 1921. These classic rolls influenced a whole generation of stride pianists and are still sold by the company.)

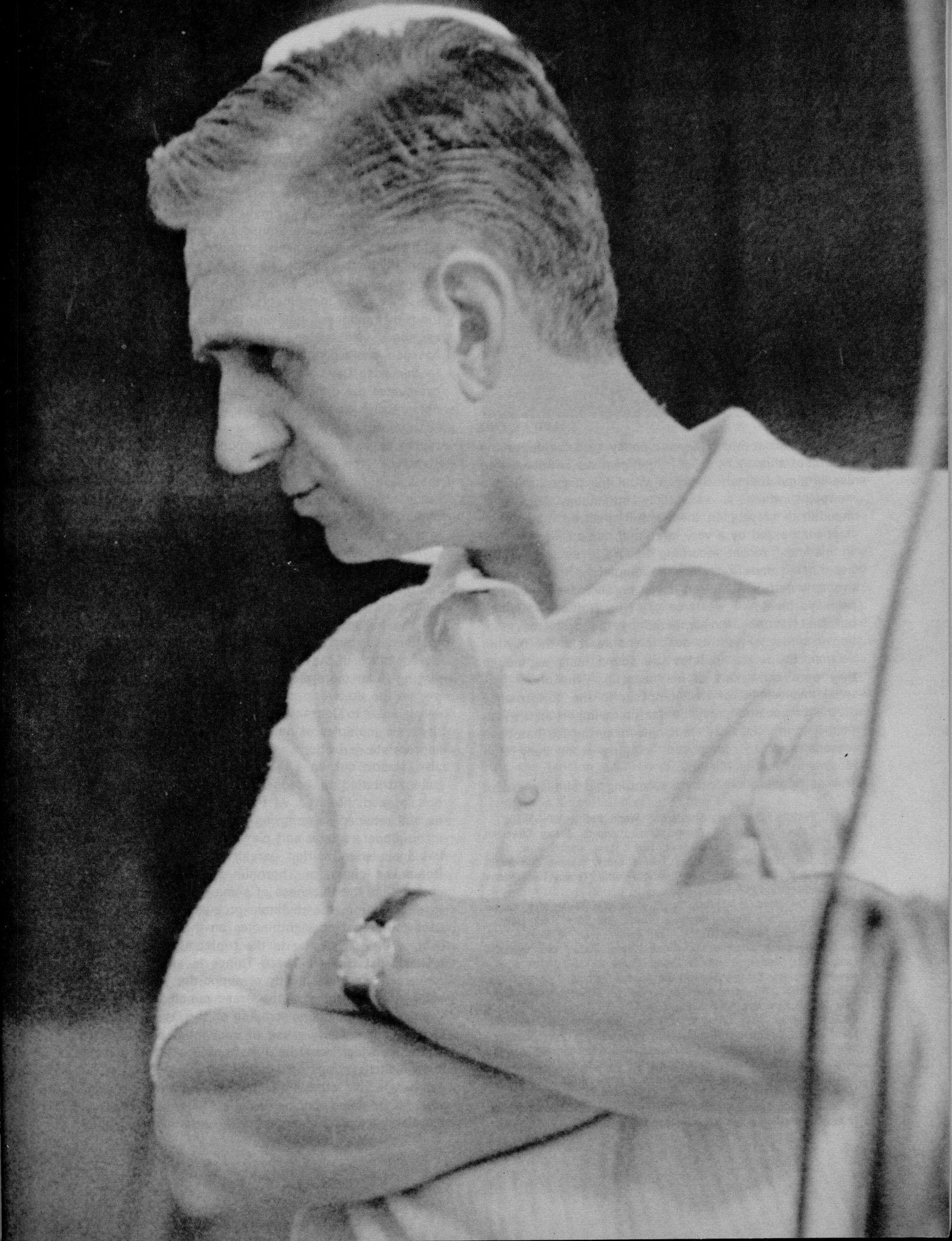
Gil Evans on his own

Don Heckman

After a lengthy process, Gil Evans has re-established his position as one of the most artistically successful composer-arrangers in jazz. His work for Claude Thornhill has been known and admired for years, but the limitations inherent in the requirements of dance bands were an obstacle to any major achievement. Despite the fact that he was one of the important figures in the '49-'50 Miles Davis Capitol sides, the strength of the various personalities involved (Davis, Mulligan, et al) was such that no individual could predominate. In fact, these sessions may have been of less importance than was generally considered at the time since a variety of economic and social conditions prevented them from exercising the influence which they unquestionably deserved.

As with most artists who take pride in their craftsmanship, Evans is able to transcend the limitations of any given assignment, no matter how mundane. If it is required that he favor his soloist, Evans can do so, as he did in the Davis albums "**Miles Ahead**" and "**Porgy and Bess**." But the relationship between soloist and composition is, by nature, extremely delicate and susceptible to a strain in either direction, and the relative failure of Gil's World Pacific lp "**New Bottle, Old Wine**" may well have been caused by Cannonball Adderly's disassociation from the context of the arrangements. In a sense, when the arranger places himself in a supporting role, he hitches his wagon to a star. The results may vary as much as the star's temperament, and the fact that the Evans-Davis recordings turned out so superbly is a testimonial to the rapport between the two men.

Many critics praise Evans as an orchestrator but refuse to acknowledge him as a real composer. The conclusion is invalid. Rubens is no less an artist because he chose to paint portraits from life, nor is Shakespeare's *Hamlet* any less masterful because the plot had been used before him. One of the functions of art is to create a symbolic illusion of life. Evans does not accept the limitations in style, form and expression of his model, but rather uses it as a motif, a point of origin from life.





AND FRIEND

The manner in which he personally contributes to the growth of this motif is as significant as if he were to use original thematic material. And his pieces reflect a viewpoint which is essentially optimistic, but never maudlin or cloying; in them a full spectrum of emotion is encompassed by a very large and human love of life. In his most recent recording for World Pacific,¹ Evans has finally made a statement completely his own. It is probably pertinent that on it and on an earlier Prestige,² he plays piano. (It was true of "New Bottle, Old Wine" but that record was hampered by the problems mentioned earlier.) From his seat in the heart of the rhythm section, Evans manipulates the sound units as though they were extensions of his fingertips. The direct personal involvement of the composer in the performance of the composition may be far more important in jazz than it is in "classical" music, a maxim which has been demonstrated by composers ranging from Jelly Roll Morton to Charlie Mingus.

The instrumentation on both recordings is similar, except

1. GIL EVANS: "Great Jazz Standards." World Pacific WP—1270. Johnny Coles, Louis Mucci, Danny Stiles, trumpets; Jimmy Cleveland, Curtis Fuller, Rod Levitt, trombones; Earl Chapin, french horn; Bill Barber, tuba; Ed Caine, woodwinds; Steve Lacey, soprano sax; Budd Johnson, tenor and clarinet; Ray Crawford, guitar; Tommy Potter, bass; Elvin Jones, drums; Gil Evans, piano.

Chant of the Weed, Joy Spring, Ballad of the Sad Young Men, Theme. Coles, Mucci, Allen Smith, trumpets; Fuller, Bill Elton, Dick Lieb, trombones; Bob Northern, french horn; Barber, tuba; Al Block, woodwinds; Lacey, soprano sax; Chuck Wayne, guitar; Dick Carter, bass; Dennis Charles, drums; Gil Evans, piano. Davenport Blues, Django, Straight No Chaser.

2. GIL EVANS: "Gil Evans and Ten." Prestige 7120; reissued as "Big Stuff." New Jazz NJLP 8215.

Gil Evans, piano; Steve Lacey, soprano sax; Jimmy Cleveland, trombone; Louis Mucci, 1st trumpet (replaced on Remember by John Carisi); Jake Koven, 2nd trumpet; Bart Varsalona, bass trombone; Willie Ruff, french horn; "Zeke Tolin" (Lee Konitz), alto; Dave Kurtzer, bassoon; Paul Chambers, bass; Nick Stabulas, drums (replaced on Remember by Jo Jones).

Remember, Ella Speed, Big Stuff, Nobody's Heart, Just One of Those Things, If You Could See Me Now, Jambangle.

that the World Pacific sides have been slightly augmented by the addition of more brass, a guitar, a multiple reed man and Budd Johnson on tenor and clarinet. The Prestige record reflects the fact that it is Evans' first major jazz enterprise since the Capitols. As a result, the thematic content develops in a less complex manner than on the World Pacific recording. There are also more ballad settings on the Prestige which, although beautifully orchestrated, are limited by this dance-band style; a much stronger emphasis is placed upon sonorities than upon rhythmic content. **Big Stuff**, for example is practically a study of the sounds obtainable from the bottom register of bass instruments. The last open fifth between the two trombones rings with the richness of the implied overtones. **Nobody's Heart** demonstrates the use of bassoon in a register first made notorious by Stravinsky. In this case Dave Kurtzer's rich, full sound completely overcomes the difficulty involved in producing such high notes. Evans' voicings are superb. There are places where soprano sax, horn, and muted trumpet produce an excellent approximation of a symphonic woodwind section. Tadd Dameron's lovely **If You Could See Me Now** features Jimmy Cleveland who plays with a particularly resonant quality in his middle register. Evans' accompaniment is generally oriented around the French Horn and is quite adequate in the frame of a dance band style. One minor irritant is the occasional use of a triplet tied to a quarter note and repeated on the first beat or the bar—an amazingly corny figure for someone of Evans' stature.

All the ballads are generally organized into two slow sections surrounding a double time center. **Remember** is very much in the Thornhill tradition, but Evans' piano playing is far more pleasant than Thornhill's. Lacy plays well in the up-tempo middle section. His use of time is very similar to Coltrane's, involving a superimposition of rhythmic multiples of nines, sevens, etc., and using the appropriate derivations as part of his basic rhythm. Lacy also stands out on **Ella Speed**, a **Georgia Brown**-type tune attributed to Leadbelly. Cleveland's work here is not so good, however. At this stage in his development he still retained an annoying tendency to overreach runs in his upper register and play on top of the beat. Evans has included a written paraphrase in the style of his **Donna-Lee** chart for Thornhill; it's mostly successful, except that the thickness of some of the voicings tends to detract from the rhythmic propulsion. Again, too, he uses four repeated eighth-notes on the first and second beat of the bar similar to the triplet figure I mentioned earlier. **Just One Of Those Things** is all Lacy. The arrangement consists mostly of supporting figures for the solo, although some of the brass punctuations suggest Evans' use of trombone comping on the Davis recordings. Lacy makes extensive use of sequential patterns here, a practice which could be disastrous in a lesser jazzman, but which he brings off admirably.

Jambangle, the other up-tempo, is an Evans original, a sort of up-dated boogie woogie. Solos by Lacy and Cleveland are good enough, but the arrangement is prob-

ably the least interesting on the recording.

The World Pacific lp differs from the Prestige in several important aspects. The band is superior as a unit and the soloists are better individually; Cleveland and Lacy are featured again, but they have now gained in maturity and expressiveness. The choice of material is also far better, and its treatment is much more in the character of jazz composition than dance band scoring. Evans' refusal to bow to the demands of fashion in solo style has also worked well in the choice of Budd Johnson as soloist for **Chant Of The Weed** and **Theme**. Johnson's clarinet style is uniquely affirmative and self-confident in these days of the instrument's decline as an important solo voice. His warm, strutting interpretation of **Chant Of The Weed** makes a pleasant contrast to Don Redman's angular whole-tone lines. Evans' recreation of the old Cotton Club theme lacks some of the nervous vitality of the original but replaces it with a tongue-in-cheek good humor. There is an interesting spot directly before the ending which typifies Evans' concern with every last vestige of sound. Johnson plays some chromatic swoops over a climatic build-up which eventually returns him to the primary theme; yet as he does so, a last, persistent chromatic echo cascades down through Lacy's soprano, adding a tiny filip to the dissipating climax.

Ballad Of The Sad Young Men is the only tune here which corresponds to the ballads on the Prestige set. There is an obvious difference of interpretation however. Evans' textures seem to be far more orchestral in character and less reminiscent of sectionalized dance band voicings. His employment of the flute as an integral component of the massed body of sound differs from the usual dance band practice of having it lead the woodwinds, or else function in unison with muted trumpets or saxes. Jimmy Cleveland's poignant trombone solo soars over a beautiful mass of shifting sound. Listen to the long, held woodwind notes in the second eight which leads into a tingling trombone smear. It is this kind of concern with detail that makes Evans' music so interesting to hear.

Bix Beiderbecke's **Davenport Blues** is another example. The 1927 work serves as a vehicle for the contemporary trumpet of Johnny Coles, yet, as is true throughout the album, no contradiction exists between the source material and the soloist. The consistent integration between the soloist and composition far exceeds the limitations of any "school" or "period." Coles plays with a warm, open sound somewhat similar to Miles'. His solos, however, are made primarily of short phrases that do not necessarily have a strong organic relationship to each other; a practice which Miles assiduously avoids in favor of interrelated melodic lines. The choice of **Straight, No Chaser** is a good one, and Evans chooses to emphasize the humor that is implicit in so much of Monk's work. Listen to the gleeful piano and cymbal trills and the moaning flute in the opening sections. The theme is stated by a driving, orchestral unison—a tricky device to use, since it depends upon the jazz feeling of every

member of the orchestra—and that was one of the main reasons that the same kind of unisons were unsuccessful in the Thornhill band. Steve Lacy's excellent solo further indicates his ability to interpret Monk's lines properly, an attribute shared by too few jazzmen. Lacy's talent is genuinely musical, and its expression is helped rather than impeded by the fact that he has chosen a difficult instrument. **Joy Spring** is a wistful bow in the direction of Clifford Brown's largely unfulfilled potential as a composer. Evans allows the melodic line to evolve from thematic material which precedes it, a sort of theme and variation in reverse. It works out well, and the theme is stated as in **Straight, No Chaser** by an orchestral unison. Ray Crawford's guitar closes the chart with a quietly elegiac cadenza.

Theme is an original Evans riff tune written while the band was playing a date at Birdland. Budd Johnson contributes a tenor solo that is a model of virile, big-band blowing. Evans weaves a complex array of brass rhythms around Johnson, and the tenorman uses them to create a polarity between their complex character and the solid 4/4 of his own rhythm. The final choruses employ a climatic effect similar to **Straight, No Chaser**, thickening the harmonic texture into an almost unbearable tension. The almost interesting piece of all to my taste is the effective denouement.

The most interesting piece of all to my taste is the magnificent setting of John Lewis' **Django**. There are so many things to listen for: the majesty of the opening brass statement (faintly recalling Sibelius' **Finlandia**); the delicate obligato between French horn and flute, and the carefully woven interplay of piano and soprano sax, played over a gently strummed guitar. Johnny Coles executes a well organized solo over a rhythm pattern that shifts in and out of double time. Then comes a positively rocking build-up as Evans lets out all the stops. Lacy improvises a line under Coles, the reeds play tremolos and the brass punches out rhythmic explosions. As the tension dies down there is a short improvised passage in which Lacy softly echoes Coles' lines; and finally, a brief horn echo of the theme.

These recordings have given me many happy hours, and I strongly recommend them as basic items in any comprehensive jazz library, particularly the World Pacific. And they are not like those "important" records that remain untouched on the shelf as source material. Evans' music on both of these records is vibrantly alive and, unless I am drastically wrong, will be as enjoyable ten years from now as it is today.

In a recent issue of **The Jazz Review**, Steve Lacy speaks of the Evans' band in glowing terms. "Sometimes when things jelled I felt true moments of ecstasy; and recently when a friend of mine who worked with the Claude Thornhill Band in the forties . . . said that some nights the sound of the band around him moved him to tears, I knew exactly what he meant. So does anybody who has ever played Gil's arrangements." And so should anyone who has ever heard his music. These recordings are among the best examples available.

Introducing Ray Bryant

Nat Hentoff

During one stretch last year, pianist Ray Bryant was doubling at the Metropole and the Five Spot. At the former, he played Sunday afternoons with Coleman Hawkins, Roy Eldridge and Charlie Shavers. At the modern jazz room, he worked first with Donald Byrd and then with Benny Golson and Curtis Fuller. At the Newport Jazz Festival the same year, Bryant was heard with Hawkins and Eldridge as well as with Johnny Griffin. Bryant sees nothing unusual in his ability to fit in comfortably with several generations of jazzmen. "For one thing," he says, "from a practical point of view, if you're making a living from a profession, you ought to be flexible within it. Can you imagine a truck driver being able to drive only one kind of truck? Besides, I happen to like nearly all kinds of jazz, and I've played most styles, including Dixieland and even some Rock and Roll."

Bryant was born in Philadelphia, December 24, 1931. Gospel music was an early and constant experience for him and his brother, Tom, who is 17 months older. Their mother plays piano in church, and their sister is both pianist and organist. Bryant feels she's the best gospel organist in the country, and hopes a plan whereby she may record with Mahalia Jackson works out. Both brothers—Tom is the bassist in Ray's current trio—played in church, and Ray ascribes the "soulfulness" attributed to his work to his background in gospel music.

He began studying piano at eight, and the lessons continued for eight years. His initial primary influences—Art Tatum and Teddy Wilson—have remained the most important on his playing. "Both have taste and both play the piano all the way—bottom, top, and middle. I was especially fortunate to have heard Tatum when I was quite young. I didn't really know what he was doing, but I knew it was good, and I certainly haven't heard anything like it since." In later years, Bud Powell became a third influence.

A member of the union at 14, his first job came instantly. Local bandleader, Mickey Collins, heard him taking his union entrance exams, hired him, and Bryant



RAY BRYANT

Bob Cato

worked in his group off and on for three years. He started going on the road with Tiny Grimes and other units. One combo stranded him in Syracuse where he stayed for a year. His experience since has included a number of solo engagements; and Bryant feels that his work as a single is the main reason he never succumbed to the modern fashion of predominantly right-handed improvising. Bryant is so substantial a two-handed player that he was able to sustain an entire album without accompaniment, **Alone with the Blues** (New Jazz 8213). "When you're all alone on a job and have to play all that piano with just your foot for help, you have to work with both hands."

Back in Philadelphia, Bryant learned to play and enjoy Dixieland for a couple of years at Billy Kretschmer's club where Kretschmer headed the band. Perhaps his most useful experience came during two years as house pianist at the Blue Note where he worked with such visitors as Miles Davis, Charlie Parker, Sonny Stitt, Chubby Jackson and Anita O'Day. "I got my first record date from having worked at the Blue Note. After I'd played with Davis, he called me up from New York for a Prestige date with Milt Jackson that included **Dr. Jackle, Minor March, Bitty Ditty** and **Changes** (Prestige LP 7034). Working at the Blue Note was helpful another way; when I finally came to New York, I already knew most of the musicians."

Bryant broadened his experience further by working as Carmen McRae's accompanist in 1956 and 1957; and then with his brother, became the rest of the Jo Jones' trio for another year. "Jo taught me that a rhythm section can play a room successfully without horns, and I learned a lot from him about programming, about how to feel out an audience's mood. If you catch the mood of a room accurately, one tune will always suggest another that will fit in. And it works the other way around. If you play the wrong tune at the wrong time, you can kill the whole set. Then there was the matter of pacing. Jo kept us building up and up until we'd hit a climax, and then we'd get off."

Bryant, encouraged by John Hammond, whom he feels has helped his career more than anyone else, free-lanced around New York after leaving Jones and decided to stay in October, 1958. He worked several jobs with Charlie Shavers in the months after as well as engagements with other groups. The idea of forming a trio had intrigued him ever since his time with Jo. and after Hammond had talked to booker

Willard Alexander about the project, bookings began to come in. The Bryant trio has worked the Village Vanguard in New York, the Town Tavern in Toronto twice, and Pythodel Hall in Buffalo twice. As of this writing, Bryant is set for Storyville in Boston, the Jazz Gallery in New York, and points farther west.

Bryant meanwhile has signed with Columbia, where Hammond is now active in jazz a&r work. Ray had first made an album with his trio (Oliver Jackson is the drummer) for Bob Thiele's Hanover-Signature label. The album consists entirely of jazz originals, by John Lewis, Thelonious Monk, Erroll Garner, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Horace Silver, Duke Ellington, Benny Golson and Bryant himself. His style remains modern with a strong base in traditional jazz. "The newer styles seem to me," he explains, "to be just a small part of the older styles that came before."

Bryant's own tune in the album, **Sneaking Around**, illustrates one of the advantages he finds in working with a trio. "It's in D major, a pretty key but one in which a pianist with a group hardly gets to play. The hornmen dominate the jazz scene, after all, and they prefer the regular band keys like F, B-flat, E-flat, A-flat and C. There are other keys though, you know."

Whenever he has a chance to do the hiring, Ray invariably selects his brother. It's not so much nepotism as the fact that he's never felt as comfortable with any other bassist. "Tom has played a little piano himself, and from the time we worked together as boys, he's been able to watch my left hand so that he always knows where I'm going." Bryant chose drummer Ollie Jackson (Detroit-born and a former sideman with Teddy Wilson, Yusef Lateef, Charlie Shavers, Coleman Hawkins and Roy Eldridge) because "Ollie is content to play time and not get in the way. Most modern drummers want to play a solo all the way through a number, but Ollie lets the soloist solo until his own turn comes."

The Ray Bryant trio is an unusually integrated one, and in view of Bryant's own range of jazz interests and his thoroughly personal and directly emotional style, it has a better chance than most to endure a while. There is little doubt, in any case, that Bryant will be a substantial figure on the jazz scene for a long time to come. Not having limited himself to just one aspect of jazz, he's a lot less likely than some of his flashier contemporaries to become dated.

THE BLUES

BROADWAY—4 A.M.

Well, it's four o'clock in the mornin'
The musicians have finished their gigs.
And the hat-check girls, they ain't made no bread
And they's salty, about to blow their wigs.

And the Cadillac boys, they all standin' around, you know,
Waitin' for their girls and their nightly dues.
But would you believe, you see better fights than you do in the Garden
When these girls sing the rigor mortis blues?

Now there's a cop, he's tryin' to do his duty,
Tryin' to hurry everybody off the street,
So he can ease back in the restaurant
And finish the free meal he had started to eat.

And then there's flower sellin' Susie,
She's makin' just one more last round,
But at this stage of the game
You can cop her whole basket for a pound.

Now then, there's always some blue bloods who want to see Harlem
And continue the fun they have had
So the leader eases up on you and sounds you,
"Man, do you know of an after-hours pad?"

You shake your head with a definite no!
You even ignore the cute little frail.
'Cause you know this is the same kind of set-up
That just last month got E—verybody put in jail.

So you quit it down to the corner
To a joint noted for its ham and eggs.
But before you can even sit down,
Two cats done already laid down their begs.

You finish your grease, and a cute chick shows up
With an over-night bag in her hand,
But she wants you to pay her cab fare
Because she just now left her old man.

And on your way to the 'A' train
About in the middle of the block
Another friend needs to borrow a deuce
To get his uniform out of hock.

So by the time you reach your destination
Trying to read the latest news,
Six winos done hit on you for a cigarette
And one stud even wanted a pair of shoes.

Well, at last you make it to your crib
Watching the new day begin
And drift off to sleep with a ghastly thought,
Tomorrow, it will all begin over again.

(Babs Gonzales. Jaro JAM 5000.)

RECORD REVIEWS

RAY CHARLES: "What'd I say".
Atlantic 8029.

Ray Charles, vocals and piano; David Newman, tenor; on *What Kind of Man Are You* the vocalist is Mary Ann Fisher; other personnel unidentified.

What'd I Say; *Jumpin' in the Mornin'*; *You Be My Baby*; *Tell Me How Do You Feel*; *What Kind of Man Are You*; *Rockhouse*; *Roll with My Baby*; *Tell All the World About You*; *My Bonnie*; *That's Enough*.

RAY CHARLES: "The Genius of Ray Charles". Atlantic 1312.

On tracks 1, 3, & 6: Ray Charles, vocals and piano; Clark Terry, Ernie Royal, Joe Newmann, Snookie Young, Marcus Belgrave, John Hunt, trumpets; Melba Liston, Quentin Jackson, Thomas Mitchell, Al Gray, trombones; Frank Wess, flute, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone; Marshall Royal, alto saxophone; Paul Gonsalves, Zoot Sims, David Newman, tenor saxophones; Charlie Fowlkes, Bennie Crawford, baritone saxophones; Freddie Greene, guitar; Eddie Jones, Edgar Willis, basses; Charles Persip, Teagle Fleming, drums.

On tracks 2, 4, & 5: Billy Mitchell replaces Zoot Sims.

On tracks 7-12: Ray Charles, vocals and piano; Allen Hanlon, guitar; Wendell Marshall, bass; Ted Sommer, drums; orchestra conducted by Harry Lookofsky.

On track 12 only: Bob Brookmeyer, trombone.

Let the Good Times Roll; *It Had To Be You*; *Alexander's Ragtime Band*; *Two Years of Torture*; *When Your Lover Has Gone*; *Deed I Do*; *Just for a Thrill*; *You Won't Let Me Go*; *Tell Me You'll Wait for Me*; *Don't Let the Sun Catch You Cryin'*; *Am I Blue*; *Come Rain or Come Shine*.

One of the most interesting recent events in jazz has been the rise of Ray Charles from comparative obscurity in the world of rhythm and blues to a position on the jazz scene. Charles has been acclaimed as singer, instrumentalist, and band leader in favorable terms indeed. The major part of this attention has been paid to Charles as a singer. Charles' vocals are of about four kinds. There are the "gospel blues" which, artistically at least, make up the most important part of his repertoire. But Charles is also a

juke box success, and we find him working with a more popular blues form which uses the same gospel elements but in which the material is handled as rather sophomoric love song which apparently appeal to a teen-age audience. Charles also works occasionally with purely comic songs which he develops without gospel fervor. Finally, he has recently begun to use popular songs and ballads, using only slight gospel overtones.

Of course, gospel music uses many of the stylistic devices common to both jazz proper and to the blues (blue notes, syncopation, antiphonal patterns, etc.). But gospel music is devotional and exhortatory; it is both an act of devotion and a call to devotion by the faithful or saved to those not so fortunate. It celebrates the joy and exaltation of the singer in salvation or the promise of salvation. Despite all they have in common gospel music differs profoundly from the blues and jazz. Ray Charles' blues singing combines the religiously exalted fervor of the gospel singer with the strictly secular concerns of the blues singer. A Ray Charles blues performance is completely different in meaning from a gospel performance, yet it is filled with similar emotional overtones. In many of his most startling works Charles virtually makes an incantation of the song and simulates the spiritual possession which is a part of gospel. But the quality of the possession invoked by Charles is sexual and even a part of his concern with the worldly side of sexual relations. Little wonder that Big Bill Broonzy should express shock over Charles' work.

Many of Charles' gospel blues songs (*Tell All the World About You* here and *I Got a Woman and Talkin' About You* from his earlier lps, Atlantic 8006 & 8025) are virtually parodies of gospel songs. This element plus the jubilant hotness of the performances at their best a startling, appealing, and moving combination.

The quintessence of Charles's gospel blues comes on his Newport recording of *A Fool for You* (Atlantic 1289).

Here he steadily works into a vocal frenzy and then a vocal incantation with a series of howls and cries which, in the context of the song, present an exacerbated eroticism. I know of no more startling blues performance on record than this. Many of his other gospel blues recordings tend in this direction, but only the Newport recording arrives at this limit beyond which such an art cannot go; his desperately reiterated monosyllables act out the exaltation and despair of total erotic possession. It is the zenith of this side of Charles' art.

In his more popular material such

as *Ain't That Love*, *Drown in My Own Tears*, and *Funny, But I Still Love You So* on the earlier lps there is a similar procedure, the only difference is that these songs are more sentimental in presentation and pedestrian in content and Charles' hints at the style of his more notable efforts do not break the cloying sentiments.

Of all the gospel blues lps by Charles the current one is the least impressive. Only *Tell All the World About You* and *That's Enough* are comparable to his previous successes. The other numbers range from the banality of *You Be My Baby* to the attempt in *My Bonnie* to blue *My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean*. Surprisingly enough, *Jumpin' in the Mornin'* attempts to emulate Joe Turner, but the results seem glib and unconvincing.

A minor part of Charles' work is represented by *Roll With My Baby* which is like his earlier *Greenbacks* and *Blackjack*. While the material of all these songs is rather slight, they are deftly developed and extremely amusing. *Roll With My Baby* is much less successful than *Greenbacks* which is surely one of the funniest things in the idiom. The new lp devoted to Charles as a singer of pop songs represents a considerable achievement. Although he strikes me as somewhat unsteady on the first six tracks, where he is backed by a large band, I think he acquits himself well on *Let the Good Times Roll*, *Two Years of Torture*, and *When Your Lover Has Gone*. The rather perfunctory arrangements by Quincy Jones, Ernie Wilkins, and Al Cohn frame Charles adequately but little more, and the solo work of Paul Gonsalves and David Newman is indifferent. On the remaining six tracks he is backed by—of all things—a string and woodwind section, a choir, and some sentimental arrangements by Ralph Burns. He takes control amazingly and produces work that is nearly continuously interesting. *Don't Let the Sun Catch You Cryin'* in particular is a minor masterpiece which both surprises and gratifies. Of course, it would seem that the blues-tinged material here is well suited to Charles, but he does not really handle it in his gospel manner; he sings in a deceptively simple and straightforward manner which results in a wry, ironic sadness touched with humor. He deftly plays off his interpretation against a schmalzy background which would have overcome a lesser artist. Each of the other numbers has good moments with *You Won't Let Me Go* probably outstanding. As a jazz singer Charles is certainly taking chances working with this sort of material and accompaniment, but an achievement like *Don't Let the Sun*

Catch You Cryin' is well worth the risk.

Charles recorded performances on piano and alto sax range from the funky blues which he produced with Milt Jackson (Atlantic 1279) to the jazz that he plays with his own group on his instrumental lp (Atlantic 1259). Charles is not a remarkable instrumentalist. The lp with Jackson has enough deliberate funkiness so that the listener may doubt its sincerity. I doubt that Charles on piano and alto would have enjoyed the attention he has had were it not for the success of Charles the singer.

The obvious question about Charles is why he should be granted such wide recognition by modern jazzmen. I think the answer can be found in problems that have faced modern jazz since the early 'fifties and solutions that have been propounded. Charles came to prominence when hard bop did. Hard bop was and is an attempt to fill the gap left by the waning of both bop and cool. The solution, a temporary one I think, was found in a return to the gospel and blues traditions. With groups such as Horace Silver's and Art Blakey's this school soon became the dominant one. This is not the place for a full examination of the successes and failures of this school, but such a trend does go a long way towards explaining Charles' reputation. In Charles the jazzmen found a singer who was doing in the rhythm and blues vein just what they were attempting to do in jazz. Charles at his best is a remarkable singer. Sometimes the excitement of his gospel blues seems somewhat overworked, nor is his art as emotionally deep and moving as that of a Muddy Waters or a Lightnin' Hopkins. Nevertheless, his best work is direct and thoroughly convincing emotionally. If Charles has decided to work in the popular song medium, it may be only too easy to follow the course of a Nat Cole. However, a number like **Don't Let the Sun Catch You Cryin'** shows the really interesting possibilities; he may be just beginning.

H. A. Woodfin

VIC DICKENSON, JOE THOMAS. Atlantic 1303.

Joe Thomas, Johnny Letman, trumpet; Dickie Wells, trombone; Buddy Tate, tenor sax; Buster Bailey, clarinet; Herbie Nichols, piano; Everett Barksdale, guitar; Bill Pemberton, bass; Jimmy Crawford, drums. **Sweethearts On Parade**, **I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me**, **Crazy Rhythm**, **Blues For Baby**.

Vic Dickenson, trombone; Buck Clayton, trumpet; Hal Singer, tenor sax; Herbie Hall, clarinet; Danny Barker, guitar; Al Williams, piano; Gene Ramey, bass; Marquis Foster, drums. **Undecided**, **The Lamp is Low**.

This is Atlantic's attempt to follow Felsted's lead and give exposure to some underappreciated swing era star soloists. Of course, this is a thoroughly admirable idea, but they could have done a much better job. The musicians didn't have enough solo space. Either there were too many musicians or too many numbers. Albert McCarthy, who helped produce this mish-mash, said he especially wanted to spotlight Joe Thomas since Joe was so poorly represented on records, but the longest uninterrupted solo Joe had was two blues choruses. To help matters several of the front line men weren't playing in top form.

Thomas relied on a lot of stock phrases and showed little of the subtlety that made his mid-'forties work on **Keynote** (Mercury) so outstanding. It wouldn't have been a bad idea to give him a ballad all to himself. Lettman shows a great deal of power and little else. He has an impressive upper register but he doesn't build anything there. Buster Bailey and Dickie Wells contribute the most to Thomas side. Bailey is consistently inspired and inventive. His playing is clean and accurate, though his conception is a little old-fashioned for my taste.

Wells is especially effective in **Crazy Rhythm**, and he sounded almost like J. J. I wish he'd clown less and play more long lines. That talking he does is nice but limiting. The same goes for Vic Dickenson, although Dicky is probably more talented. Buck Clayton is generally below standard although his statement of the melody on **Lamp** is pretty. didn't get a chance in **Undecided**; his solo ended just as he was starting to cook.

Buddy Tate doesn't set the world on fire, but who can in eight bars? His playing was interesting from another standpoint however: here it is the closest thing I've heard to present day Coleman Hawkins. In 1940 when Tate was with Basie he sounded more like Dick Wilson or Herschel Evans. And Singer also sounds like Bean. That Hawk can influence not only younger men but his mature contemporaries is a wonderful testimony to his constant efforts to find fresh, new musical paths to travel.

Both rhythm sections are competent. They provide a firm, strong beat for the musicians, but I'm not sure the guitar was necessary. Many times it just seems to get in the way, especially in the **Blues**.

It's a terrible reflection on I don't what that Herbie Nichols has to make this kind of date. If he were to be recorded a little more in the proper surroundings he might get his due recognition as a really outstanding modern jazz composer-

pianist. He's no cocktail Monk!

Harvey Pekar

VIC DICKENSON, JOE THOMAS: Atlantic 1303.

Joe Thomas & Johnny Lettman, trumpets; Dickie Wells, trombone; Buddy Tate, tenor; Buster Bailey, clarinet; Herbie Nichols, piano; Everett Barksdale, guitar; Bill Pemberton, bass; Jimmie Crawford, drums. **Sweethearts on Parade**; **I Can't Believe that You're in Love with Me**; **Crazy Rhythm**; **Blues for Baby**.

Vic Dickenson, trombone; Buck Clayton, trumpet; Hal Singer, tenor; Herbie Hall, clarinet; Al Williams, piano; Danny Barker, guitar; Gene Ramey, bass; Marquis Foster, drums.

Undecided; **The Lamp is Low**.

Stanley Dance, appalled by the traditional revivalist and a diehard bop counter-revolutionary, coined the term "Mainstream" to describe his kind of music — that form which in the years circa 1934-1944 was described as "swing music." Mr. Dance rejects the term "swing" because, he states with an attempt at objectivity, "all good jazz, of whatever kind and era, theoretically swings." His snide "theoretically" tips his hand. He knows damned well that only "swing" swings, but nevertheless choose the term "mainstream," presumably to attract everyone into the swim of things — the traditionalists from the backwaters and the modernists from the current.

Well, c'mon in, the water's torpid. Mr. Dance produced the generally unsuccessful Felsted "Mainstream Jazz" series; Albert McCarthy produced this album in the Felsted tradition using groups led by Joe Thomas and Vic Dickenson.

The swing era produced giants who had individual voices and personal stories to tell. Some of these men play better now than they did in their days of greatest popularity; some of them have settled on a plateau where they still tell their old stories very well; some are dead; and some are dead musically. The ranks are thinning, and in a brief time, the musicians and the style will be irretrievably gone. Unfortunately, Messrs. McCarthy and Dance, after choosing several musicians of the first rank, pad out the ensemble with men who had minor roles in leading groups or were associated with the great individuals — men who are equipped to serve as anthropological informants perhaps but are unable to perform as the shamans in the ceremony. These second-raters who performed a section role adequately and thereby enjoyed a fame-by-association are boosted to stardom in a small-group recording, and they blow and they blow, and their conscientious efforts merely

create a vacuum which even an important player cannot fill. If Messrs. McCarthy and Dance are properly subsidized, perhaps it is only a matter of time before the appearance of "Wallace Jones—Ellington Star Returns!" or "Henry Wells Croons Lunceford Favorites."

Joe Thomas is a competent middle-range swing era trumpeter who openly pays his dues to Armstrong, Eldridge and Williams, but lacks their genius, fire and rhythmic flexibility. McCarthy's album notes cite his 1946 Keynote performance of *Black Butterfly* to establish his importance; probably Mr. McCarthy has never heard the 1940 recording by Cootie Williams which Thomas duplicates. And if you've never heard Armstrong's 1931 recording of *Sweethearts on Parade* you might enjoy Thomas' brief solo contributions in his 1958 recording. The band selected by or for him, with one exception, functions at or below his level. The exception, Dickie Wells, plays consistently logical and witty solos at his pre-war Basie level. Buster Bailey, a technician who dates from the pre-swing era, appears to be attempting to recall Handy's Brass Band of Memphis in most of his solos. Buddy Tate plays with the capable dullness he showed as Basie's second-string tenor man, and he has added touches one normally finds in rock-and-roll. Johnny Lettman, although faceless and often discombobulated, is a firebrand whose playing shows greater vitality, if less organization, than the leader's. The hornmen (raggedly playing three standards sketchily arranged in Sunday-at-Ryans fashion by Dick Vance) rush helter-skelter to an unsteady, nervous rhythm section; the culprits appear to be the relentless Everett Barksdale and the heavy-handed Jimmy Crawford, who didn't used to be like that.

The poorest track by the Thomas group is *Blues for Baby*, an unfeeling improvisation which, according to the sleeve notes, lasts for 12:50 (or 2:10 longer than the entire Dickenson band's contribution). No one covers himself with glory but Buster and Dickie get by.

The Dickenson group's contributions are something else. Although no arranger is credited, both *Undecided* and *The Lamp is Low* show planning and rehearsal. The latter selection, an unlikely choice, played in an unorthodox medium-up tempo, is extraordinarily successful. Shining soloists are Dickenson and Clayton who, unfortunately for one of the premises behind the "mainstream" position, have not been neglected on record. Supporting horns Herbie Hall and Hal Singer are satisfactory. Herbie is a less colorful version of brother Ed, and Singer, a follower of

The Frog, impresses as a pocket-sized, abridged Webster. The rhythm section is light, buoyant, and Basieish. The Dickenson group could have been an attractive advertisement for "Mainstream".

While the foregoing may not sound like it, I am on the same side of the watershed as Mr. McCarthy and Mr. Dance. I don't think the term "Mainstream" is evocative of much of anything, but you can call "Swing" "Mainstream," if you like. I am concerned lest it be called "Mud." Swing now stands in that position held by New Orleans jazz in 1939 when most of the early greats were still playing. Only a handful of records made by Dodds, Ladnier and Morton survive from that period, a time of meager recording activity. This lp era can do better. However, shoddy choice of musicians and careless production will not attract record buyers, and the companies will therefore conclude that the only salable merchandise consists of the activities of the newest group of whiz kids from Philadelphia or tiger cubs from Detroit. And the time will pass. By 1945, Dodds, Ladnier, and Morton were long gone and all we had were the Revivalists and their Saints. Remember, gentlemen, the time is again 1939.

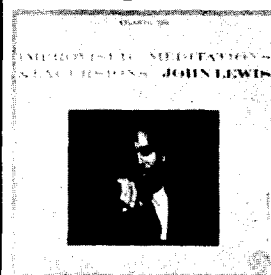
Louis Levy

SNOOKS EAGLIN; "New Orleans Street Singer". Folkways FA2476. Blues singing is strange. A strange art (if that's what should be said to get most of your respect, i.e., attention). Art is the fat toad we westerners swallow at the drop of a hat. So I'll make out like I think blues singing is that boy too. So strange, because it cannot ever be properly grasped; conjured with. A man sings blues (it seems) when he feels like it (records are wondrous if they make us think this way)—blues is singing with and without occasion.

A man told me Thomas Jefferson invented the blues. Wal, thass fine! Another man told me Billie Holiday wasn't a blues singer. O.K. twelve bars (theme and variation/ strophe-antistrophe) is that what'll do it? Then I can make Johnny Mathis a blues singer? Good. I knew a Negro in Newark named "Mean William" who didn't know what blues were. I told him onee, and he thanked me. He had a harmonica he won in a chewing gum machine, and he only knew songs he made up himself. He claimed he never knew the names of anything. He also claimed he could get plenty of money (to pay back all the kids that loaned him their soda money) if he could only find out where he lived. He did sing blues

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though, and most beautifully, artfully. He was an artist too, then. Blues singing I don't know how to talk about. I hear these people singing, and want to know all about their lives. Bessie Smith, Ida Cox, Billie Holiday, Mama Yancey, Blind Lemon, etc. When I hear them I wonder what must have happened in their lives to form their singing so. Or then, somebody tells me it's all a wedding of the Occident and Africa. "Mean William, you're just a wedding of the Occident and Africa."

Snooks Eaglin's is one of the most marvelous voices I've ever heard. Whatever he says in these songs seems true, profound, and given such a pitiless sophistication that one is forced at times into a kind of involuntary stunned silence. I listened, as the poet John Wieners says "with my hand over my mouth"; in complete amazement, and persuaded that this was, perhaps, the most beautiful voice I'd ever heard. And that word *beauty* need not be qualified, only, perhaps, clarified. When I listen to Bessie Smith, or Lemon, or even John Coltrane, the idea of a "beautiful thing" does not occur to me. The power of the expression, the terrible clarity,—that say, Mama Yancey, forces upon me, leaves small room for any consideration of the artifact in that hopeless Berensonian sense. But from Eaglin, I get the feeling of and *object*, an artifact of such graceful instruction that someone might label it Quattrocentro. His voice is slight, trails off in odd places, and is certainly incapable of any gymnastic. But it also is so tender and thoroughly musical that sometimes it seems that the feeling Eaglin is trying to transmit is almost too valuable for him to let go. "Come back baby, please don't go, For the way I love you baby, you'll never know."

Eaglin is only 22 years old, and has been blind almost all of his life. Another strange thing about him is that he learned almost all of the songs in his repertoire by listening to recordings or the radio. But I suppose this is not too strange considering how many other things in our culture that once were dependent for their perpetuation on the oral tradition have now been continued largely by commercial sources, certainly all forms of folk culture.

Most of the songs on this first album are standards. See, See Rider, Rock Island Line, Every Day, Careless Love, St. James Infirmary, Trouble In Mind, etc. All of them are given to us in such complete interpretations that they take on a newness all "art" must have. I would say Eaglin has to be talked about with Lemon, Bessie Smith, Yancey, et al, Now, at

22, even if he does not ever sing another note.

LeRoi Jones

DUKE ELLINGTON-JOHNNY HODGES: "Back to Back". Verve MG V-8317.

Harry Edison, trumpet; Johnny Hodges, alto; Duke Ellington, piano; Les Spann, guitar Sam Jones, bass; drummer unidentified. Basin Street Blues; Beale Street Blues; St. Louis Blues; Loveless Love; Royal Garden Blues.

Al Hall replaces Jones.

Wabash Blues; Weary Blues.

At first hearing this lp sounds like a casual, almost too relaxed, session and the uncommon beauty of the music seems accidental rather than the result of artistic endeavour. Appearances are deceptive sometimes. The three main protagonists, Ellington, Hodges and Edison, are all masters of jazz improvisation and mastery always makes even the most difficult accomplishments seem easier than they really are. Teddy Wilson, for example, will always convey the impression his piano is playing itself, and only the pianists in the audience know just how deceptive that is. Mastery obviates unnecessary or wasteful expenditure of energy, every effort is accurately directed to the fulfillment of clearly envisaged aims. Every track here gives evidence of some preparation but improvisation is clearly the main thing. Again, none of the musicians, particularly not the horns, does anything that is startlingly new; there are no noticeable changes in the characters of their ideas, their methods of constructing choruses, etc. Each invents abundantly in his own settled idiom. It is obvious when a musician like John Coltrane creates because, at his best and with his newly-minted style, he plays things the like of which have not been heard before. When Hodges or Edison play in their long-established styles, creation is not so easy to detect. An idea of the real freshness of their work in this instance can be given by saying they have taken some of the most hackneyed items in the whole jazz repertoire and made them sound as if they were being played for the first time. Although purists would not admit him within the canon, Ellington is, as Leonard Feather rightly says in the liner notes, a most remarkable blues pianist. This record draws attention to the fact more effectively, perhaps, than any other. In the main body of his work with his band, the originality of Ellington's music is determined by the unique character of his ideas and the skill with which he develops them in relation to the group's ensemble and solo resources. With his piano blues improvisations the basic ideas are not remarkable at all, and the force of these solos

derives from his highly individual—almost idiosyncratic—approach to the keyboard. The foremost quality of his pianistic method is its absolute freedom, and in this he even exceeds Monk. Ellington appears almost incapable of thinking in terms of conventional keyboard devices and evolves unusual and always changing textures. Contrast is important to him and rich, sustained chords alternate with filigree decoration, high register is set against low. Original arpeggio constructions abound, and everywhere is Ellington's unique sense of time evident, not least in the accompaniments. His best moments here are the *Weary* solo—possibly the finest passage of the best track in the collection—the fascinating opening to *St. Louis Blues*, and the *Basin Street* and *Beale Street* solos. *Basin Street*, especially his second chorus, is a noteworthy instance of conventional basic ideas being used to creative purpose, while *Beale Street* contains a remarkably graduate take-over from piano to guitar. *Loveless* has a striking piano introduction and a solo that is scarcely less characteristic.

As befits a man over fifty Johnny Hodges no longer blows quite as passionately as in former years but his invention, given sufficiently stimulating circumstances, is as effortless as ever. The rather unpleasant hardness he exhibited in *Flirtibird* on "Anatomy of a Murder" is absent, and every track here finds him with a tone as ravishing as in the greatest days with Ellington's band. His outstanding solo is I think, on *Beale Street*, although that on *St. Louis* grows from its theme with a wonderful effect of natural inevitability. The *Basin Street* improvisation is almost equally rich, and his tone especially warm, while 'luxuriant' seems the aptest description of his *Loveless Love* theme statement.

Edison's best work has an air of what might be termed justified conservatism. His tone is enough in itself to establish his identity, he does not venture into extreme of register, and his melodic ideas are personal but simple. His open work is generally best and his choruses on *Basin Street* and *Wabash* are particularly fine, with terse, well-shaped melodic development, and the tension is skilfully relaxed at the end of the latter solo. Muted, he is rather prone to detached, too often repeated, phrases and this is illustrated by the trumpet solos in *Loveless* and *Weary*. His *St. Louis* solo begins well with some unusually long lines but later deliquesces into a string of those isolated, downward-smearing notes that have become his favorite method of coasting. He

is rather lethargic over Duke's attacking chords in his first chorus on *Beale Street* but improves in the second. Better linear construction is shown in *Royal Garden*, and to be fair one must end by saying that the solos that best represent Edison's powers are very satisfying. Ensemble playing by the horns is not of much importance on this sort of date, but in some tracks they play antiphonally in a way derived from the statement and response of vocal blues. The best instances are the introduction and coda to *Wabash* and the delicious theme-restatement of *Loveless Love*.

Max Harrison

RED GARLAND TRIO: "All Kinds of Weather". New Jazz.

Garland, piano; Paul Chambers, bass; Arthur Taylor, drums.

Rain, Summertime; Stormy Weather; Spring Will Be a Little Late This Year; Winter Wonderland; 'Tis Autumn.

Red Garland is a sophisticated, delicately expert player whose distinctive voicings (antecedent traces of which can be found in some of Al Haig's work and in Errol Garner's ballads) have influenced a number of young pianists. He has two customary approaches to the piano. First, his often graceful single-note lines, accompanied by small, stroking chords which fall on (or a hair before) beats one and three. Second is his technique of coupling each melody note with a simultaneous chord, using a lot of parallel motion in his changes (this device is not to my personal taste, and I think Garland overuses it).

His work on this album is neither more nor less interesting than that on his others. It is rarely exciting or moving, and sometimes dull, but he swings lightly and effortlessly without strain. Garland fans should be satisfied. Chambers and Taylor are both impeccable.

Mait Edey

STAN GETZ: "Imported from Europe": Verve 8331.

Stan Getz, tenor; Benny Bailey, trumpet; Ake Persson, trombone; Erik Nordstrom, tenor; Lars Gullin, baritone; Bengt Hallberg, piano; Gunnar Johnson, bass; William Schioppfe, drums; Jan Johansson, piano (tracks 2, 3, 4); Bjarne Nerem, tenor (tracks 6, 7).

Bengt's Blues; Honeysuckle Rose; They Can't Take That Away From Me; Topsy; Like Someone In Love; Speak Low; Stockholm Street.

A recent review of this record stated that Stan Getz was overrated by most jazz critics. I share this opinion but once a conviction is stated it must be supported or it is of no more use

than so much gossip. I have several reasons for believing Getz does not deserve acclaim as "best modern tenor man."

One of the main criteria for judging the work of any artist is originality. In 1947, when he cut his famous version of *Summer Sequence* (later recorded as *Early Autumn*), he was playing in a style harmonically and and rhythmically quite similar to Lester Young's. (There were traces of Bird, of course, but Bird even affected Hawkins.) However, he did "comb Prez's sound smooth", and that's what tricked everybody, it seem. His tone was much cleaner than Lester's; it has been accurately described as having a "piercing purity", a kind of shy beauty that makes one recall his lovely, naive youth—even if he was a juvenile delinquent.

But Getz was not the only tenor man to realize that Lester's sound could be rough, nor was he the first to do anything about it. In 1946, before he joined Herman, Getz cut some quartet records for Savoy with Hank Jones. The contrast between them and his playing of a year later is amazing. On the earlier sides, a big jagged sound and aggressive attack are reminiscent of Dexter Gordon or Morris Lane.

On the other hand, listen to the playing of Herbie Steward. In 1946 he recorded two solos on Norman Granz's "Jazz Scene" album. He sounds quite a bit like Getz until you remember the year. When you do, you start thinking Getz sounds a lot like Steward. Ira Gitler, a reliable source in these matters has written that Getz was influenced by Steward. Even if Getz did conceive this change himself, however, its quality would not match the innovations on tenor playing made by Sonny Rollins, or John Coltrane—quite possibly the the most important reed men since Charlie Parker. (Imagine Getz trading fours with them.)

Getz is rightly called a ballad master. He stays close to the melody but plays with great sincerity and, of course, his sound is choice. His up-tempo efforts are not of the same quality. He is uncomfortable in anything faster than a medium bounce grove, and has said so. Sometimes nowadays he stalls by playing a lot of stock "funky" clinches, more often he become nervous and almost phrases ahead of the beat. When this happens, he is like a man trying hard to sound like he's swinging. Give Getz credit for the fact that he is constantly trying to grow. For the past several years he has been going back to his bigger sound and more aggressive attack of 1946. Whether this has actually been an improvement is a matter of opinion but he hasn't been sitting on his

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laurels as Sims or Cohn have. The playing on this album is rather typical of his recent work. He seems to want to graft an unnatural funkiness onto his style. He even uses the hard swinging "down" figures and squeals on ballads. It's embarrassing and incongruous. Nat Hentoff says in his liner notes that Getz is easily the major figure on this album. This isn't entirely accurate. Trumpeter Benny Bailey, a minor legend to Cleveland musicians, is present on a few cuts though his playing isn't up to standard. Benny is an original stylist, with a conception similar to Clifford Brown's, and a fine technique. Here he sounds like he doesn't give a damn. Art Farmer always admits that Benny taught him quite a bit. He should get a chance to record as a leader with some good East Coast musicians who would provide him the stimulus the Swedes apparently don't. Their playing is reminiscent of some of the cliché-ridden stuff to be heard in California. The arrangements are corny and cluttered.

Harvey Pekar

DIZZY GILLESPIE: "Have Trumpet, Will Excite". Verve MG V-8313. Dizzy Gillespie, trumpet; Junior Mance, piano; Leslie Spann, guitar and flute; Sam Jones, bass; Lex Humphries, drums. **My Heart Belongs to Daddy; My Man; Moonglow; St. Louis Blues; Woody'n You; Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams; There is no Greater Love, I Found a Million Dollar Baby in the Five and Ten Cent Store.** Remarks about Dizzy's genius or the elements of his style should be not necessary for readers of this magazine. Enough to note, for those that haven't been listening recently, that his melodic imagination is still among the most fertile in jazz, that no one can play more delicate and subtle rhythmic patterns, and that his technical supremacy on his instrument is incontestable. The sidemen here have been working with him in clubs, and the tunes are taken from the group's club repertoire, but have been pruned of most of Dizzy's comic effects (the best are visual anyway), and those long, twitchy choruses of bare Latin Latin rhythm. What remains is technically polished and occasionally spirited playing by everyone involved. Dizzy himself is in spotless form, but not at his most daring. He sounds restrained, and I've heard him play many of these phrases before. All the tracks are head arrangements (according to the notes), but with almost as many preplanned passages as blowing choruses. The rhythm section, as a section, is smooth, supple and altogether

satisfying. Humphries is generally content to lay down a simple, uncluttered pulse, on brushes much of the time; his accenting is expert. Junior Mance combines a light touch, intense drive, and a lot of blues in a Peterson-oriented style. Les Spann doubles on guitar and flute. His guitar work is generally idiomatic modern, long lines and rapid fingering, but with traces of Django Reinhardt in both tone and the technique of phrasing in octaves. I don't like his vacant and cold flute work, though. This isn't a record that will be remembered as one of Dizzy's best, though no record on which he plays a major part can fail to be interesting. A soloist of his stature (and drawing power) doesn't need to work with second-rate material or arrangements of transient interest. This set is recommended for some of the solo work with the qualification that it would have been much better if it had been less diluted.

Mait Edey

"BENNIE GREEN Swings the Blues." Enrica Records.

Bennie Green, trombone; Jimmy Forest, tenor; Sunny Clark, piano; George Tucker, bass; Paul Gusman, drums. **Been Walkin'; Blue Mambo; Love at Last; Penthouse Blues; Hop Skip & Jump; A Bun Dance; Pennies From Heaven; Change Up Blues.** This is not just another blowing session. Rather, it is a mainstream blowing session, mainstream in the narrow or Stanley Dance sense. It is the fourth lp in the last 18 months which has involved Bennie Green as leader accompanied by tenor or tenors and three rhythm. There is little evidence that either of the horns has absorbed into their conception anything that has come to pass on the jazz scene since the early 'forties. Bennie is an aggressive, simple, humorous, extroverted and vigorous swinger who has an original sound that is only somewhat reminiscent of the pre-Louis Armstrong Trummy Young; that this sound has been used to express the same ideas for, at least, the last decade is the rub. Jimmy Forest is of the same attitude and era. However, he hasn't Green's humor or individuality and his interpolations are frequently inane. Sonny Clark's solos seem to consist in great part of Silverisms. The tunes are not new for example, **blue Mambo** was recorded as **Let's Stretch** on Prestige 7041 about four or five years ago), and the arrangements seem special only in Slim Gaillard's sense of that word. There are frequent remembrances of **Blow Your Horn**. Having decimated everybody and everything may I say that this lp

swings right along and is quite pleasant for casual listening.

I. W. Stone

HOWLIN' WOLF: "Moanin' in the Moonlight". Chess LP-1434.

Howlin' Wolf, guitar and vocal; unidentified piano and drums on all tracks; unidentified harmonica on all tracks except 8, 9, and 12. **Moanin' at Midnight; How Many More Years; Smokestack Lightnin'; Baby, How Long; No Place to Go; All Night Boogie; Evil; I'm Leavin' You; Moanin' for My Baby; I Asked for Water (She Gave Me Gasoline); Forty-Four; Somebody in My Home.** Howlin' Wolf, Chester Burnet, is a blues singer deeply rooted in tradition, who, like Muddy Waters and others, has found an audience in the Chicago area. In this center of the newest Negro migration from the South, the older blues has retained most of its emotional validity even when coupled with accompaniments, like those here, that tend to drown the singer in a mass of afterbeats and tedious riffs.

The music of Howlin' Wolf is of a savage intensity completely untempered by compassion. His world is one unlightened by either lover or mercy, a world of treachery and betrayal where the only humor is darkly ironic. In this respect the emotional range of his work is much narrower than that of a Bill Broonzy or Blind Lemon Jefferson. Of course the air of desolation which dominates much of his work is not without its counterpart in the work of other singers, but for these others desolation and betrayal are not the only thing.

Howlin' Wolf's voice is dark and plangent, remarkable in its force of delivery. On **Smokestack Lightnin'**, for example, he drives home the line "Tell me, where did you stay last night" with a tension which makes it reverberate in the listener's ear long after the track is over. The lyrics themselves are a melange of long familiar blues phrases which he, at his best, makes new by that drive and rough energy with which he virtually beats them into the listener's ear; and he produces series of howls and near screams which intensify the words.

Of course this approach does not always come off, and there are times (**Forty-Four** is an example) when even delivery fails, the accompaniment dominates, and we pass from the blues to the dreary world of rock. But these times are few, and particularly on such numbers as **How Many More Years, I'm Leavin' You, and I Asked for Water**, he succeeds both in dominating his accompaniment and in reaching the listener with full power.

If we judge Howlin' Wolf by the standards of a Muddy Waters or

Lightnin' Hopkins, I think it is obvious that his work is inferior to theirs both in its material and in delivery. However, there is still enough on this lp to warrant attention from anyone seriously interested in the idiom.

H. A. Woodfin

STEVE LACY: "Reflections". New Jazz 8206.

Four In One; Reflections; Hornin' In; Bye-Ya; Let's Call This; Ask Me Now; Skippy. Steve Lacy, soprano sax; Mal Waldron, piano; Buell Neidlinger, bass; Elvin Jones, drums.

The soprano sax is a *rara avis* wherever and whenever it appears. In writing this I think of things as diverse as Marcel Mule's attempt to use it as a substitute for the high trumpet in the second Brandenburg concerto (or was that an E flat sopranine?), a young Bob Wilber and others emulating Bechet, Herbie Fields using it as a kind of vaudeville prop, Hodges and Barnet trying to pretend they were still playing alto. There are perfectly good reasons for this curious status: contrary to its lower-pitched siblings, the soprano blends with other instruments with some difficulty; while it is perhaps not intrinsically out of tune (That is, impossible to construct properly), its high tessitura and conical bore require considerable care from the player; finally, the extremes of the horn's range seem to be needed more often than with the other saxophones—the high notes to keep out of the trumpeter's way in Dixieland, the low tones because the range would be poor indeed without them. But the high tones (besides presenting fingering problems), show a tendency to thin out to insignificance, and the low tones need a firm embouchure as well as a horn with air-tight pads. I speak of these matters with feeling since some of the first money I ever earned went to buy a venerable Buescher soprano which I nursed along over a number of years, always hoping to find just that amount of bite, that stiffness of reed, that mouthpiece lay which would make the horn sound the way I thought it should.

The instrument a man plays is no trivial factor in the way he plays. Anyone who has known a number of musicians has had, from time to time, the feeling that clarinet players as a breed differ from drummers in some important way. Nobody can spend his live with a metal tube of peculiar manufacture without it becoming more than a tool of the trade.

All this as a preface to my opinion that Steve Lacy has turned the special position and difficulties of the soprano sax most successfully to his advantage, and that his individuality as a creative musician has been

profoundly conditioned through his dealings with its particular qualities. His tone is not one that will appeal to all. It is like a hard drill and only occasionally, at the end of a phrase, permits itself a well-nigh inaudible touch of vibrato. It is fresh, unsentimental, detached, neither brassy nor reedy. Still, these things, which I take as virtues in the frame of Lacy's style, have not been achieved without effort; and the effort shows in one's sensation that the tones are squeezed out, and in that damnable acridity of tones above B flat. This hooting timbre does not project in the way that Bechet's tone did, or the way the plum-pudding sound of the saxophone colossi who learned in the thirties how to override a dozen furiously blowing musicians does. But it makes a brilliant and penetrating impression, nonetheless, much as an oboe might were it used as a jazz voice.

This manner of approach to Lacy's music shouldn't be forced beyond reason, for even when he was heard in the context of out-and-out or modified dixieland it was clear that an original imagination was involved. But it is likely, it seems to me, that his originality can only have been stimulated by the choice of a horn which in the jazz of today has no tradition, no firmly established style which give critical blood hounds a field day. While Lacy could conceivably have given his solos meaning by constant cross-reference to a common storehouse of jazz figures, as Mulligan frequently does for example, in point of fact he rarely does so.

Whatever the benefits that must have derived from his collaboration with Cecil Taylor, it was not entirely happy. In this latest Lacy is not dominated to his disadvantages by the accompaniment, and the *ethos* of Monk's pieces and musical conception is in tune with the economy and purity of his style. As much as he has been enchanted by Monk—and one completely sympathizes with that—he insists on an over continuity and consistency of melodic line which I think is not prominent in Monk. Nevertheless, Lacy's predilection for widely separated intervals, often distantly related harmonically, is along Monk's line. Three or four tones, artfully placed in a relatively simple harmonic skein, can be a beautiful thing and can say more than ten choruses of inundating scales.

The B side is the better. Monk's *ostinatos* are well executed by the rhythm and Buell Neidlinger is consistently on top of the beat. On *Let's Call This* Waldron is more graceful, less forceful than the master, but the clarity of texture is there all the same. *Ask Me Now* is perhaps the most telling piece. I might point

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especially to the construction of Lacy's chorus after the piano solo. **Skippy** attempts a fantastic tempo, faster than Monk's, but after the first statement of the tune is hard put to maintain the initial tension and excitement. And perhaps it is the tempo which forces the soprano to squeal now and again. **Four and One** finds Waldron sounding like Wilson-Guarnieri plus Monk, and in **Hornin'** In this slickness is a bit disturbing. On **Bye-Ya**, however, we sense a rhythmic backbone and swing in his playing that Lacy seems to lack. The first and fourth bands don't work too well as unified pieces. The bass and drum fours of **Four in One** teeter on the edge of chaos, and the ending cum fade-out of **Bye-Ya** needed to go back to the shop. I think it fair to say that Elvin Jones' drumming is both somewhat overbearing and unsympathetic. Omnipresent cymbal-shimmer is all right, and we have come to accept it as part of the style, but the random stick-work of **Let's Call This**, the senseless brush strokes at the end of **Hornin'** In, and the busyness of **Ask Me Now**, to single out the most obvious instances, are lapses of taste. Possibly they stand out only because the record is otherwise so well-conceived.

Larry Gushee

"The Piano Scene Of DAVE McKENNA". Epic LN 3558.

Dave McKenna, Piano; Osie Johnson, drums; John Drew, bass.

This Is The Moment; Silk Stockings; Way Down Yonder In New Orleans; Fools Rush In; Expense Account; Lazy; Splendid Splinter; Lickety Split; Along With Me; Secret Love; Da-Da-Da-Go-Dig-It; I Should Care.

Dave McKenna's own particular way of swinging is the strongest and most characteristic quality of his playing. He lays everything right on the beat, avoiding any rigidity that might grow out of his unvaryingly strict divisions of the time through the effortless delicacy with which he controls shadings of touch, creating a pleasing variety of color in accent, melodic continuity and tonal density. His solos are a satisfying combination of soaring melodic invention and joyous rhythmic impulse, always bold and thorough but never forced or overdecorated. Having Osie Johnson and John Drew for support, Dave omits the left-hand walking line that was done so well on his solo album (ABC Paramount 104). Instead, his left functions in a number of ways, comping, echoing his right hand, occasionally rumbling around the bass line or chording in four like a rhythm guitar. On **New Orleans** he plays a hearty stride with good command of and respect for the style.

Though this date does not sound

rehearsed, the tunes are well chosen and thoughtfully treated. I'm sure Osie did his usual good job of forming instant rapport with the group and is responsible for much of the relaxed feeling on all the sides. There are many rough edges in his accompaniment, and one of his tom-toms sounds like an overturned trash barrel, but the important characteristics of his work—his sureness of feeling and his sensitivity to the central elements of every musical situation—abound on these tracks and give an indication of the reason he is in such demand for unrehearsed record dates.

John Drew does everything just right; he uses his ears well, produces a rich bass sound, and drops every note right where it belongs. Both he and Osie have a number of brief solo spots, but their chief service here is the sustenance and support of McKenna's brilliant work.

Historically, Dave relates to pianists of the swing era more than he does to either Bud Powell or the funky-blues players of his own generation, but he is neither an antiquary nor a throwback; his playing reflects the music he has heard, including what has been done in the past ten years, but it is evident that he prefers the emotional character of the music of the 'thirties and the time feeling that was prevalent then to any of the styles that have been developed since. It is refreshing to hear this kind of swing played organically and impulsively, without any indication of desire to recreate the golden past or disinter its heroes.

Lester Young and Teddy Wilson have clearly influenced Dave's playing, but is unnecessary to have heard either of them to understand and be moved by McKenna. He has received his heritage without making any undue fuss about it, and has reformed familiar materials through a strong inner vision of beauty into a living, complete, intensely personal musical expression.

Bill Crow

"ANITA O'DAY Swings Cole Porter with Billy May". Verve MG-V0000.

Just One of Those Things; You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To; Easy To Love; I Get a Kick Out of You; All of You; Love For Sale; Get Out of Town; I've Got You Under My Skin; Night and Day; It's De Lovely; I Love You; What Is This Thing Called Love.

Anita O'Day has for many years occupied a peculiar position in the music, lost in that limbo between the popular singer and the authentic jazz artist. Cursed by an imagination too vivid for the one and too sterile for the other she has never achieved the stature her talents warrant. There are singers who, by the sheer power of electric personality and technical virtuosity, can transcend this shadow

world and attain a unique, personal greatness. Witness Frank Sinatra and Harry Belafonte.

One reason why Miss O'Day remains a bridesmaid may well be the same reason she has long maintained the respected, if not honored, position she holds. Lacking the technical brilliance of Ella Fitzgerald, the richness of Sara Vaughan, the raw warmth (once described aptly as "rawmth") of Billie Holiday or the sophisticated, sad charm of Lee Wiley she nevertheless possesses all these virtues to some degree. In addition she has always projected a wonderful combination of lasciviousness and naivete—a Lolita in a white lace dress whispering a four-letter word. The occasions when she manages to unite these talents in a single performance are joyous ones for her audience. Which brings me, sadly, to a consideration of the above recording. As you have probably not gathered from the foregoing analysis, I have long been an ardent admirer of Miss O'Day, far more often rewarded by her gifts than rebuffed by the lack of technique or occasional cliché. Thus, it grieves me to report that these fine Cole Porter standards have been done better elsewhere—many times.

Never at her best in front of a big band, Miss O'Day is unfortunately cast here in the role of referee while Billy May's orchestra strangles the Bard of Broadway to death in the background. Her occasional smart phrasings and riffs are smothered by the oppressive brass and leaden rhythm of the orchestra. Nor does she herself much improve matters. Most of the selections are sung (and, of course, played) in a nervous, herky-jerky tempo that fits neither the musical comedy nor the supper club atmospheres to which the songs of Mr. Porter are equally adaptable. Only three cuts deserve special mention, and one of these, **Night and Day**, is noteworthy only because it performed at such a frenetic pace the listener can only assume that the cleaning men were standing by impatient to lock up the studio and get to work. **What Is This Thing Called Love** is given a brisk, individual O'Day treatment complete with the gleeful oo-bla-dees that characterize her work at its best. Unfortunately, those among us with long memories will recall a similar treatment of this standard by Miss O'Day (in the dear dead days of the Rag Doll in Chicago and the 78 rpm record) that was far superior.

To save the best for last—I **Get a Kick Out of You** opens with a smoky, sensual intro and then really swings. Even the reluctant May is won over for a moment and furnishes a bright, driving accompaniment that makes this interpretation almost, but not quite, worth the price of

admission.

Ray Gandolf

BUDDY RICH AND MAX ROACH:
"Rich versus Roach". Mercury
MG 20448.

Nat Turrentine, trumpet; Willie Dennis, Julian Priester, trmbones; Phil Woods, alto; Stan Turrentine, tenor; Jimmy Bunch, piano; Phil Leshin, bass; Max Roach, Buddy Rich, drums.
Sing, Sing, Sing; The Casbah; Sleep; Figure Eights; Yesterdays; Big Foot; Limehouse Blues; Toot Toot Tootsie Goodbye.
The title is enough to indicate that this is one long drum battle. So it proves to be, with the percussion solos framed—except on Figure eights—with sketchy ensembles and diversified with rather empty horn, piano and bass solos. The technical accomplishment of the two leaders is, of course, overwhelming and compels admiration. Yet this record is almost inevitably mainly of interest to drummers and, one suppose, to stereo enthusiasts, for on the stereo copies Rich and Roach each have a loudspeaker to themselves. Rich's contributions are little but technical displays while Roach shows, as everyone would expect, a great deal of rhythmic imagination and a more flexible approach to his instruments. There is a great variety, more light and shade, in his solos. This is most notable in Yesterdays, where Rich follows him.

Max Harrison

HORACE SILVER: "Blowin' the Blues Away". Blue Note 4017.

Horace Silver, piano; Eugene Taylor, bass; Louis Hayes, drums.

St. Vitus Dance; Melancholy Mood (New version).

Blue Mitchell, trumpet; Junior Cook, tenor; added.

Blowin' The Blues Away; Break City; Peace; Sister Sadie; The Baghdad Blues.

The playing on this album is of rather uneven quality, but the best moments are superb. Blue Mitchell's up-tempo work is some of the most thoroughly hot, joyous trumpeting I've heard in some time; I find myself constantly lifting the needle to get to his choruses.

St. Vitus Dance is the better of the two trio tracks. It is an original by Silver (as all the tunes are), taken at a moderate, swinging tempo, and it recalls some of his earlier trio recordings. However, it lacks the tight consistency of the best of those; it sounds a bit careless and off-hand. I'm not familiar with Silver's earlier version of Melancholy Mood, but this version strikes me as stiff and repetitive. I don't think ballad playing is one of Silver's several talents; here, he seems forced into double-

timing, and his inappropriately percussive, jagged attack is anything but expressive of melancholy. On the whole, the quintet tracks are more interesting. Blowin' the Blues Away is a very fast blues with a fine theme full of holes alternating with single explosive notes played unison by the horns. Break City (very fast) and The Baghdad Blues (moderately fast, not a blues) are good originals; the latter has a particularly flowing theme after a rather silly oriental introduction. Peace is a very slow, tranquil ballad. Sister Sadie is taken moderately fast, and except for Mitchell, is a dull piece marred by some tasteless single-note riffing behind Cook's solo. It is one of those self-consciously down-home bits with artificial flavoring added.

These tracks are of interest primarily because of Mitchell's work and Louis Hayes's vigorous, headlong drumming. When he is audible, Taylor sounds solid, but he is frequently drowned out by Silver and Hayes, who operate at top volume and obscure his lines. Better recording balance would have compensated for this. Junior Cook's work, I'm afraid, is not impressive here. He plays with a brutish tone which permits no expressive shading, employs the narrowest possible range of dynamics, and suffers from lack of melodic imagination and stiff time. If he could crawl out of that tangle of repetitious hard-bop cliches, he would be a much better tenor.

Mitchell could hardly be a greater contrast. His ideas are fresh, his tone is clear and even (almost entirely without vibrato), his time is excellent, and his technique is flawless. Most satisfying is his heat and passion, more evident here than on his own Riverside album. I guess comparisons with Clifford Brown are inevitable, but Mitchell (judging only from his work here) tends to play shorter lines composed of notes with a greater variety of time-values, and intersperses them with single sustained tones.

He has three lovely solos in this set. That on Sister Sadie, right after the opening theme, with Silver leaping and plunging behind him, is very simple, almost old-fashioned, and exuberantly exciting. His choruses on Blowing the Blues Away and Break City are more ambitious, full of beautiful things, one after another. The Baghdad Blues and Peace solos are good enough, but lack the fire of the others.

Silver's own playing is best on the up-tempo tunes. At slower tempos his phrasing becomes vacuous and mannered; he is at his dragging worst on Peace. He has very busy, hustling choruses on Blowin' and Break City, and gives Mitchell good comping throughout.

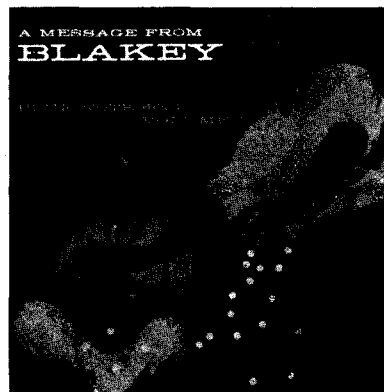
Malt Edey

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ZOOT SIMS: "Jazz Alive! A Night at the Half Note". United Artists UAL 4040.

Al Cohn, Zoot Sims, tenor; Phil Woods, alto (on tracks 3 and 4); Mose Allison, piano; Nabil Totah, bass; Paul Motian, drums. *Lover Come Back to Me; It Had to Be You; Wee dot; After you've gone.*

The unity of a jazz performance is not necessarily bound up with arrangements and premeditated design. Were it so, to regard jazz as anything more than a weakly offshoot of Western music would be stupid. Fortunately, its appeal lies not only in structural felicities—important as these are—but in an immediacy that defies analysis. This quality may not be reduced to rhythmic terms alone, yet few would deny there is a link between the two. The playing of the rhythm section here helps greatly to promote the sense of flux and constant renewal that makes listening to this record so invigorating an experience. As far as I know nobody has described any of the three musicians concerned as pre-eminent, but the pulse they generate together is an ideal complement to the soloists, and when Allison solos, the undercurrent flows just as strongly. Sometimes, in the manner of George Wallington, his left hand takes over for his right in the execution terse chorded passages; at others, he uses it merely to color in a firm melodic outline. He never aspire to emotional heights, yet his charm is real enough, based on a fine ear for melody and a sure swing. Cohn and Sims are ideal partners in a group of this kind. Their approach to improvisation is similar enough to guarantee cohesion and different enough to add variety. In recent years Sims' tone in the lower register has thickened, and its warmth heightens the effect of the sound he gets at the top of his instrument's range, light, fluid, probing, even exacerbated in its restraint. Cohn, on the other hand, is less mobile. He draws the utmost effect from each sustained note, and though his sour tone and emphatic phrasing have sometimes made his work seem plodding and dull, he steers clear of those faults here, no doubt helped by the supple accompaniment. Both tenorists have the gift of melodic inventiveness. *It Had to be You*, taken at medium tempo, best illustrates this gift. The profusion of ideas, highlighted by inflection and tone, lends the performance an unhurried lyrical grace that is not without its strength. The horns work beautifully together in the opening and closing theme statements here. Their lucid interplay—Cohn, say, submits a personal version of the melody whilst Sims inserts his comments—achieves the same glowing relaxation as the improvised

choruses have.

This balance in the ensembles is disrupted on two of the performances by Phil Woods. The music immediately becomes more tightly knit, the loss in poise compensated in part by extra concentration. It is interesting to see that the tenorists' soloing is affected too, the rests between their phrases cut down. Woods' style has changed considerably since his first appearances on record: he is now on the track of a more intricate kind of symmetry and his tone is harder and rougher than before. His reed seems rather recalcitrant, but in the raw sound he gets sometimes intensifies the emotive power of his phrases: listen, for example, to the last chorus of his solo on *Wee dot*.

Michael James

T-BONE WALKER: "T-Bone Blues". Atlantic 8020.

Although T-Bone Walker is hardly the funky Muddy Waters-type cat whom Ralph Gleason describes in the album notes, this recording is a hell of a lot of fun. T-Bone's basic limitation is a lack of variety in his singing and playing, so Atlantic has intelligently supplied him with different kinds of instrumental backing: a small combo of guitar, bass, drums and piano, a larger combo of three guitars, tenor sax, piano, bass and drums, and a big band.

T-Bone's blues are half-way between down-home country blues and the blues of contemporary Negro rock and roll singers. Walker is not subtle, nor is there much folk poetry of interest in his lyrics. Mostly these are familiar big city laments about women, or good and bad times. There is nothing here like Blind Lemon's

"Ain't no more potatoes the draught done killed the vine, the blues ain't nothin' but a good woman on your mind." This is a record to dance to, or to play while you're washing the windows. On two numbers, Barney Kessel joins Walker and R. S. Rankin on guitar. Kessel proves to be the least inventive of the three in blues idiom. Walker plays a nice modernist-oriented solo on *Two Bones And a Pick*.

The instrumental backing that Atlantic gives Walker is more than satisfactory on the whole, especially the tasteful tenor sax playing of Plas Johnson, and *Play On Little Girl* has a nice feeling for a big band blues; the repeated harmonica figure is effective and T-Bone's guitar fits in well.

Dick Weissman

"WE THREE". New Jazz 8210.

Phineas Newborn, piano; Paul Chambers, bass; Roy Haynes, drums.

Reflection; Sugar Ray; Solitaire; After Hours; Sneaking' Around; Our Delight.

EVANS BRADSHAW: "Pieces of Eighty-Eight". Riverside 12-296.

Bradshaw, piano; Alvin Jackson, bass; Richard Allen, drums.

The Trolley Song; Mangoes; Pushing the Blues; It Aint Necessarily So; Take the A Train; A Foggy Day; It's All Right with Me; Blues for Jim; Night in Tunisia.

I am reviewing these two records together because they are rather similar in style and share some of the same faults. Both pianists are young players with considerable technical skill and a sound knowledge of their instrument; both base their blowing style on splashy single-note lines in the right hand accompanied by characteristically choppy left hand chords which fall too frequently on the first and third beats of the bar; both use similar block chord techniques, shakes and trills, and parallel lines (usually two octaves apart). Finally, both tend to overuse similar clichés—fluent and sometimes funky, but clichés nevertheless. I much prefer the Newborn-Chambers-Haynes set. Each member of this trio is superior to his opposite number in the Bradshaw group. The album is packaged as a communal enterprise (Newborn is not the nominal leader), and the excellent rhythm men are given extensive room of their own. Material ranges from the gently swinging slow blues *After Hours*, through a series of fine originals in the middle tempos, *Reflection and Sneakin' Around* (both by Ray Bryant), *Our Delight* (by Tadd Dameron), and *Sugar Ray* (by Newborn), to the slow ballad, by Newborn out of tempo. Newborn's playing is consistently light and deft, but sometimes shallow and soulless. He does better on the fast tempos where he can bring his technique to bear without sounding too gaudy, and which are easier to keep moving. His mood sounds carefree; this is essentially happy, or rather placid playing; sorrow, passion, or intense lyricism are not attempted. The out of tempo passages on *Solitaire* are grotesquely cold and exhibitionistic. Roy Haynes is not a particularly flowing drummer; he prefers the abrupt accent, a kind of more rocking propulsion, and a variety of tone qualities. His solos are interesting and tasteful, never showy. Chambers is as usual dependable and steady, and takes delicate and careful, rather than overtly emotional, solos. Bradshaw has a sharper, more abrupt attack than Newborn, but, as noted, the basic elements of his style are the same. The clichés are more evident, however. He tends to use longer lines than Newborn, lines which are apt to spill out into a sustained shake lasting a bar or more

before falling back into a single-note pattern. Unfortunately, the overall impression is one of vague, bumpy formlessness; the lines become repetitious, fall into what seem to be automatic patterns, and dissolve aimlessly. Rapport between piano and rhythm is erratic, and the swing wobbles as a result. Jackson and Allen function primarily as accompanists, and do well enough, especially Jackson, but the trio is not sufficiently cohesive to generate sustained momentum. I understand Bradshaw is very young and has only limited experience behind him. Considering this, and the scattered successful moments on this record, improvement seems likely. More than anything else, he needs to edit himself, to concentrate on more purposeful, simpler lines, and to depend on his rhythm support to do at least some of the driving. The notes, by Orrin Keepnews, are excellent, and include an editorial diatribe on extravagant liner notes in general.

Mait Edey

THE BIG 18: "Live Echoes of the Swinging Bands". RCA Victor LPM 1921.

Tuxedo Junction; *Easy Does It*; *Hors d'Oeuvre*; *Blues On Parade*; *Liza*; *Five O'Clock Drag*; *March of the Toys*; *I'm Prayin' Humble*; *The Campbells Are Swinging*.

GEORGE WILLIAMS AND HIS ORCHESTRA: "Swing Classics In Hi-Fi". United Artists UAL 3027.

Marie; *Flying Home*; *Boogie Rockawoogie*; *Back Bay Shuffle*; *Breaking In a Pair of Shoes*; *Drum Boogie*; *One For My Baby*; *The Breeze and I*; *Take the A Train*; *Empty Jug*; *Pompton Turnpike*; *Endville Chorus*.

VAN ALEXANDER AND HIS ORCHESTRA: "The Home of Happy Feet". Capitol St. 1243.

Let's Get Together; *Chant of the Weed*; *Until the Real Thing Comes Along*; *Uptown Rhapsody*; *Stompin' At the Savoy*; *Undecided*; *I Would Do Anything For You*; *A-Tisket, A-Tasket*; *East St. Louis Toodle-Do*; *Organ Grinder's Swing*; *Christopher Columbus*; *Ride, Red, Ride*.

Not everyone is looking back in anger. To judge from the appearance of these three albums, contemporary Ellington and Basie are not enough. There are people around still hungry for the sounds of the Swing Era. In catering to them, the producers played safe and recorded hits of some of that period's popular bands, one from each, in slightly doctored arrangements. The results generally give an inadequate idea of the diversity of style and approach which prevailed despite similarity of instrumentation. To newcomers, these collections may even suggest that the bands of Larry Clinton, Jimmy Krupa were comparable in quality to

Dorsey, Bert Ambrose and Gene Krupa were comparable in quality to those of Duke, Basie and Chick Webb. And those of Jimmie Lunceford, Earl Hines, Fletcher Henderson and Benny Carter might as well never have existed.

In connection with *Tuxedo Junction* and *Stompin' At the Savoy*, whoever heard of, respectively, Julian Dash and Edgar Sampson? That is the way it goes, the way the Swing Era went, the creators submerged by imitators.

Although the choice of material is somewhat unhappy, the Victor album is the most successful. More than the others, it recognizes the importance of the soloist and tonal variety to the big band. The corporate sound and beat, the catchy, hummable riffs, the arrangement or composition, may seem in retrospect to have been the vital factors, but the man down front and his individual statements were of the greatest consequence. The bands with several strongly distinctive, often competitive personalities, were the ones whose work remains significant, for the fire those men created in their solos lit up the ensembles, too.

Nearly all the musicians on the Victor dates were veterans with considerable experience in big bands. Among them, such soloists as Buck Clayton, Rex Stewart, Charlie Shavers, Vic Dickenson, Dickie Wells and Johnny Guarneri express themselves with an authority and individuality that relates appropriately to the arrangements. In the context of *Easy Does It*, for instance, Buck Clayton's and Dickie Wells's are authentic, dominating voices, their solos fresh and inventive, their tones and phrasing uniquely their own. *Five O'Clock Drag* is the most rewarding performance on any of the records. Here are sequences of solos by, first, Rex Stewart, Charlie Shavers and Buck, and then by Lawrence Brown, Dickie Wells and Vic Dickenson, with the emphasis on contrast rather than rivalry. The formidable trombone trio is superb behind Rex in his last chorus here, and this is one of several instances where arranger Charles Shirley has gone out on his own and written very satisfying backgrounds. On this number, too, he wisely avoided an imitation of Ben Webster's contribution to the original.

The arrangements of George Williams on the UA album represent a more conscious, but by no means patronizing attempt at updating. This is praiseworthy, but it is hard to understand why so many doggy vehicles were chosen. The most interesting transformation is perhaps that of *Flying Home*, on which Hank Jones's crisply swinging piano is advantageously featured. The younger musicians whom a.&r. man Jack

Lewis favors interpret the scores with commendable accuracy and vigor, but some of their solos sound distinctly incongruous against those riffs and melodic conceptions of another era that the arranger was obliged to maintain. The few improvised passages that register refreshingly come from Joe Newman, Art Farmer, Hank Jones and Zoot Sims. Drummer Charlie Persip is impressively active on the first two sessions and, according to the notes, Barry Galbraith plays trumpet on the last! None of the three Williams originals is notably original, and despite the addition of tuba and bass trombones and a consequent thicker texture, his scores provide far less in the way of color and dynamic contrasts than Shirley's.

From the point of view of basic material, the Capitol collection is the most intelligent. It consists of numbers made popular at the Savoy by swinging bands as so subtly differentiated, shall we say, from Swing Bands. Here are remembered, besides Duke and Chick Webb, the bands of Claude Hopkins, Don Redman, Andy Kirk, Lucky Millinder and Al Cooper. Van Alexander's scores are neat and workmanlike. The playing, as befits west coast jazzmen, is clean and bland, and rather anonymous. There are competent, professional solos by people like Shorty Sherock, Plas Johnson and Barney Kessel, but in the main they are of an incidental, uninspired character. There are two cathartic vocals by Joe Howard and popular Shelly Manne operates by courtesy of Contemporary Records. (Isn't Bill Douglass in the telephone book yet?) Van Alexander wrote the notes on this album and he, surely, was the one to have given credit to his predecessor with Chick Webb, the man who helped so much to establish Chick's band artistically, the man who wrote *When Dreams Come True*, *Stompin' At the Savoy*, *Blue Lou* and *Don't Be That Way*, namely Edgar Sampson.

Camden, I understand, has a tribute to the Savoy in the can from a big band led and arranged for by Nat Pierce. It could be more rewarding than any of these albums. But while I am all in favor of perpetuating and reworking the better items in imaginative and constructive if one of the jazz repertoire, as Duke does in his own, I think it would be more the major companies were to assemble an all-star group to interpret a new series of big-band originals by such writers of "swing classics" as Don Redman, Edgar Sampson, Sy Oliver, Jimmy Mundy, Andy Gibson, Billy Moore, Eddie Durham, Buster Harding, Budd Johnson and Mary Lou Williams.

Stanley Dance

BOOK REVIEWS

THE ART OF JAZZ, edited by
Martin T. Williams. Oxford University
Press, 1959.

The Art of Jazz is one of the finest books ever compiled on the subject of jazz and perhaps in some ways the most important, for it represents an anthology of jazz criticism and writing on jazz at the highest level, and contains essays that are not only edifying in their perspectiveness, but even inspiring.

Both qualities are rare in jazz writing. The articles selected by the editor are not the kind of glib journalism that, by and large, plagues jazz year in, year out. One has the feeling, on the contrary, that the writers of these articles wrote them because they had to; they had something original and important to express. In fact, in most of the writing, there is the same kind of creative urgency that distinguishes the music and musicians discussed in the anthology. *The Art of Jazz* therefore, give us not only a collection of illuminating essays, but indirectly also a history of intelligent jazz criticism of the last twenty years.

Having said that, I feel free to add that, in this individual parts, the book occasionally does not measure up to

its quality as a whole. Obviously it would be hard to point to an anthology about which such a criticism could not be made. But whatever weaknesses some of the articles may disclose, they are more than outweighed by the definitive quality of nearly half of the essays in the collection.

The best pieces, in my opinion, are Larry Gushee's on the King Oliver band and Glenn Coulter's on Billie Holiday. They combine intelligent analysis with a deep love and respect for their subject. They are the kind of articles that make an indelible impression, and make you run right out and buy the recordings discussed. Moreover, both essays are written with excellent literary style, which, for me, raises the content to an expressive level rarely encountered in jazz writing.

Several contributions are almost as good. Max Harrison's is certainly the most thoughtful critique of the Modern Jazz Quartet to date. Ross Russell's four articles on "be-bop", written in the late forties, when this music was still very controversial—at a time, in other words, when very few people (including most musicians) were able to say anything articulate about the music—stand up very well after ten years, and are, in addition, of considerable historical importance. Paul Bacon's perceptive words on Thelonious Monk, at a time when Monk was still totally unrecognized by laymen and musicians alike, fall in the same category.

William Russell's studies on three Boogie Woogie blues pianists (Lofton, Yancey, and Meade Lux Lewis) set new standards of jazz criticism back in 1939. They combine historical fact with a certain amount of unpedantic analysis in a judicious blend. Occasional musical examples illustrate Russell's points succinctly.

Guy Waterman's otherwise fine piece on ragtime fails precisely in the area of musical analysis. Two pages of analysis of Joplin's *Euphonic Sounds* are not only full of errors, but are confusing and amateurishly stated even when correct. I think Mr. Waterman should have been advised to leave the analyzing on this level to a competent musician, or at least he or the editor should have checked his results with one. Fortunately, musical analysis is not the most convincing method with which to appraise either ragtime or Joplin's simple music (simple in the best sense); therefore not too much damage is done. And Waterman's two-part article is otherwise very commendable.

There is also Martin Williams' excellent summation of recent stylistic changes (1958) in jazz, and his perceptive statements on Monk, Rollins, Wilbur Ware, John Lewis, and the changing role of jazz drumming constitute rare present-day examples of real jazz criticism.

The Art of Jazz also contains a number of solid pieces that make a good start but in various ways do not go quite far enough. The best of these are George Avakian's superior liner notes on Bix Beiderbecke and Bessie Smith, and Ross Russell's fine study of James P. Johnson,—all three excellent in their way. William Russell's article on Jelly Roll Morton's *Frog-i-more Rag* is good, aside from an occasional touch of overstatement. But I kept wishing that the article had dealt with Morton's Hot Peppers recordings, surely his greatest claim to fame.

Charles Fox's piece on Ellington in the 'thirties fills a serious gap, I suppose, but again does not say nearly enough about this crucial period in the development of the Ellington band. I have no particular opinions about Paul Oliver's piece on Big Maceo, mainly because I don't know enough about Maceo. But perhaps that's just the point; I had hoped to know more about this blues singer after reading the article than I now know. Off hand it seems to me, this is the kind of "personal opinion" piece that doesn't really tell you very much, and of which jazz has had an over-abundance. Vic Bellerby's piece on various aspects of Ellington's music I found similarly "impressionistic" and unfortunately most annoying in its hyperbolic and inaccurate use of adjectives. Somehow words like "spectral," "macabre," "occult," "fierce," "raging" are words that seem out of place and far fetched in speaking of Ellington, especially in the context of the recordings so described.

Andre Hodeir's controversial study of Tatum is weakened by a far too personal and subjectively polemical approach. Although some of his points contain a basis of truth, one is inclined to think, after reading some of Hodeir's more naively brandishing statements and in view of Tatum's absolutely unique abilities, "So what!". The music of Tatum—even despite some of the weaknesses Hodeir ascribes to it—somehow still is more important than Hodeir's criticism of it. And if Hodeir demands "toughness, ruthlessness and cruelty" in his jazz geniuses, one is tempted to ask where he finds these characteristics in the music of Gil Evans, whom Hodeir admires so unequivocally.

Marshall Stearns' note on Sonny Terry is, for my taste, a little vague at crucial moments, and I can't help feeling that a better example by Dr. Stearns might have been chosen, especially on the early sources of jazz. One other minor point that bothered me was that the original dates of publication were not given for many of the articles. In view of the constantly shifting nature of jazz, and out of consideration for the writers involved, I think it is mandatory in an anthology

that covers such a span of years to give these dates.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that this is a book not only for fellow jazz writers and aficionados. I recommend its best sections to musicians as well. Musicians are notoriously ill-informed about their own musical tradition. And while I would agree that, as a rule, writing on jazz does not exactly inspire confidence in the genre, several pieces in this collection are definitely a welcome exception to the rule.

Gunther Schuller

The Story of Jazz by Marshall Stearns. Oxford University Press, 1956, 1958, Mentor Book, November, 1958.

The Story of Jazz has been with us for several years now. It was widely and generally favorably reviewed when it first appeared in 1956, and has undoubtedly been very widely read since its appearance in an inexpensive paperback edition late in 1958. It is in view of the latter probability that a few remarks from a new standpoint can be pertinent at this late date. I say new in the assumption that previous evaluations of Dr. Stearns' work have been made by persons of experience and authority in the field. For my part, I claim neither experience nor authority, but speak as an interested representative of what I take to be a legitimate segment of the anticipated audience of **The Story of Jazz**: the lay readers, the neophytes.

The Story of Jazz evidently embodies an important and ambitious project. The most obvious shortcoming of the book, however, lies in its failure to define and limit the project. The result of this basic uncertainty is, almost inevitably, a certain confusion which permeates virtually all aspects of the book—content, arrangement, style, format. The basic uncertainty seems to concern two interdependent things. On the one hand, the scope of the story, that is, the very stuff of the book, is not clearly delimited. If the intention is "to outline the main currents of a great tradition," as the introduction would have it, then much of the detail of the text is superfluous, and the arrangement of the book is obscure. The ensemble of materials, including the notes, bibliography, and syllabus, intimates a rather less modest undertaking than an outline.

The scholarly trappings themselves point to the second facet of the uncertainty: it is not clear for whom the book is intended. I referred above to the uninitiate as a legitimate segment of its intended audience. But what is the casual reader to make of the lecture syllabus? or of the notes, which are exclusively bibliographical? Quite evidently these are designed for a "serious" reader; yet the technical vocabulary and style of the book are



Noted jazz historian, MARSHALL STEARNS, author of the STORY OF JAZZ, takes notes for his new book on jazz and the dance from an interview tape that he plays back on his NORELCO 'Continental' tape recorder. DR. STEARNS is Director of the INSTITUTE OF JAZZ STUDIES and Associate Professor of English at HUNTER COLLEGE. "I make constant use of my NORELCO 'Continental' when doing field work for my books and articles," states DR. STEARNS. "Here, the most significant feature is three speed versatility. I find that the extremely economical 1 1/2 speed is ideal for recording interviews from which I later take material needed for my work. The other speeds are exceptional for their ability to capture the full fidelity of music and voice." The NORELCO 'Continental' is a product of North American Philips Co., Inc., High Fidelity Products Division, Dept. 1ee3, 230 Duffy Avenue, Hicksville, L. I., N. Y.

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eminently popular. I believe that it was in the matter of choice or definition of audience (or lack of same), upon which the ultimate content of the book was contingent, that *The Story of Jazz* first went wrong.

In music, it is difficult indeed to write for a universal audience. Experts are hard to please, and scholarly paraphernalia don't make a scholarly work. Yet there have been some notable successes of this order, even during the present epoch of specialization, which tends to discourage such attempts; for instance: Sir Donald Francis Tovey's musical articles for *Encyclopedia Britannica*; Alfred Einstein's *A Short History of Music*; Curt Sachs' *Our Musical Heritage*, are all highly regarded by students of music; none exhibit any scholarly apparatus beyond a good index. But what is most significant, and I think true of a great majority of works which have succeeded in reaching a nearly universal audience, they were written specifically for the lay reader. The writer who aims to capture both the general reader and the expert, as I think Dr. Stearns has tried to do, might well take a lesson from these examples.

What I am suggesting here is not that *The Story of Jazz* would have been better without its trappings; I am suggesting, rather that the failure to define the project has led to serious flaws in the selection and presentation of the material. It has affected the balance of the book, giving far too much weight to technical and historical details of "pre-jazz," which (though fascinating in themselves) are not very convincingly related to the "great tradition." I suspect that basic indecision is also behind the vagueness of the discussion of "classical" music in relation to jazz, and behind the disappointing attempts to define and/or describe jazz.

The latter disappointment, which I consider a crucial one, arises early in the first chapter, and is never satisfactorily allayed. For example, we read that march rhythm, that is, duple meter, is basic to jazz, but that "... something new has been added—the music swings." We are thus briefly and summarily introduced to a basic attribute of jazz. The disappointment, in this case, consists of the subsequent evasion of the concept "swing" almost to the point of total exclusion. Neither in Chapter 21, "Melody and Rhythm," nor in Chapter 22, "Expressiveness in Jazz: A Definition," (at the end of which Dr. Stearns proposes a tentative definition of jazz), does the word swing appear. I fail to see how the concept "swing", which is basic to jazz and for all practical purposes foreign to classical music, can be meaningfully designated "complex flowing rhythm" as it is several times. That phrase can apply equally well to classical music, and offers no insight into the nature

of jazz rhythm. Perhaps it was not really part of the intent of the author to define jazz; or is this, as I suspect, one of the results of indecision?

The matter of poor balance of materials could perhaps have been avoided in part by organizing the book somewhat differently. Had Section Six, "The Nature of Jazz," been used (with necessary adjustments) as an introductory chapter, what in the present arrangement seems like an unnecessarily large and sometimes irrelevant body of background information might have gained pertinence. At the same time, this arrangement would perhaps have offered a better framework for the discussion of non-African elements of jazz, which are given painfully short shrift in the present arrangement.

This is not the place for a catalogue of the many components, good and bad, of *The Story of Jazz*. My purpose in this restricted evaluation is only to point out what may seem a self-evident truth: that the admirably ambitious intent of the book does not constitute sufficient ground for unmitigated praise. In all fairness, it must be emphasized that Dr. Stearns has attempted the nearly-impossible, especially in view of the fact that *The Story of Jazz* has no precedent of similar scope. But, as Dr. Stearns himself is undoubtedly aware, there is still ample reason to look forward to another "story" or, hopefully, a real history of jazz.

Marion Gushee

Blow Up a Storm. by Garson Kanin. Random House, New York.

Those who note the book reviews I write from time to time may have gathered that one of my dislikes is the "jazz novel." I do like to think that I am not hopelessly prejudiced; that should a really worthy book suitable to being described by those two words come along, I would welcome it loudly and warmly as a long-awaited friend. But the day of its arrival has not yet come, and Garson Kanin, who is a Broadway and Hollywood director, a playwright (most notably the very funny *Born Yesterday*) and inevitably an ex-saxophone player, has not even advanced us a moment closer to that day by writing *Blow Up a Storm*.

The problem is once again, as it so often is, that those who choose to write fiction about jazz don't really know the first thing about the music and those who live with and by it. In formulating (I decline to use the verb *creating*) this novel, Kanin has attempted a job roughly similar to writing a saga of the pharmaceutical business after having spent six weeks as a soda jerk in a drug store. But presumably the potential publisher of such a novel might have someone check to see whether the ingredients in the prescriptions were correct, or at least correctly

spelled. Jazz, however, is accepted as a *terra incognita* (if I may allow myself a quick shift in metaphor); let a dusty traveller show up claiming that he has been there and knows all its secrets and he is immediately taken at his word, without even an elementary cross-examination or a glance at his credentials.

Usually, jazz novels are the work of terribly earnest young literary rebels, all full of Art and the Struggle of the Creative Artist and similar turgidity, and charitable folks can excuse them by attributing it all to their being young, or being friends of Jack Kerouac, or things like that. But Mr. Kanin has no such easy way out. He is a pro, a man experienced in the theater and in writing, and it says on the jacket that "for two years he . . . put aside all theatre and film activity in order to write" this book. I find this not only incredible but saddening. The fact is that Mr. Kanin can write; he puts together a sentence and a scene adeptly, and he has tried to give this book another plot besides the one about the tortured artist who makes good and/or goes to seed. That is, he has lots of that kind of stuff in it, but he also has another story line, one that unfolds through a series of flash-backs that gradually bring us from the early 'thirties towards the present and resolves for us the mystery surrounding the death of a musician named Slug (described in the book's jacket blurb as "a huge, black, gifted drummer"!)). Since this almost brings the book under the protection of the laws of the Mystery Writers' Guild, I won't go into how it turns out, except to note that it's pretty silly.

So Kanin, who can write interestingly and has on other occasions indicated that he can handle dialogue and characterization, can't be excused on the same basis that you excuse the 'gifted amateur'. I don't think it can be excused at all. For, even if you want to accept his story line and his sometime way with a scene (there's an extensive treatment of a marijuana party that may not be deadly accurate but sure is entertaining), no one who knows the least bit about jazz could read this book without squirming at all the howlers. Kanin just gets so many things all wrong, and doesn't know so much. To note merely a few, he doesn't know the history of mixed bands (he has a small one playing at a tearoom in New York and a larger one in a movie-house stage show in the same city in the early 'thirties); he doesn't know about plausible combinations of instrumentation; he doesn't know about how record sessions go. There are lots of other things he doesn't know about: like the unlikelihood of a good trumpet player and a good drummer having a private two-man cutting contest on *Parlez-Moi D'Amour*, or like anything at all about Negro-White relationships in or out of

the music business—but such criticism gets me into the realm of personal opinion, and the point I'm trying to make is about factual error.

How can a professional be so sloppy or careless-arrogant with facts? The only answer I can come up with is that he must think it doesn't matter, that a novel about the world of jazz isn't worth the care or research that some other kind of novel would warrant. Maybe Kanin didn't deliberately look at it that way; maybe he assumed that he did know what he was doing. But whether deliberately or not, he has been guilty of a laxity that is very close to contempt for his subject. Under the circumstances, it should not be surprising that his characters and their behavior and motivation belong rather closer to the level of TV dramas about jazz musicians than to any member of the American Federation of Musicians I ever ran across.

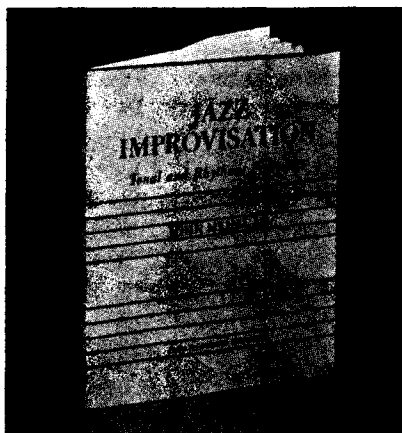
The disheartening aspect of this "jazz novel", of course, is that it is such a different kind of bad one: not the mystical-corny Portrait of the Artist kind of badness, but the off-handed, superficial, slick-professional kind, and from a man who might have been expected to know better. Who might at least have been expected to be enough of a pro to know the one really relevant fact—that no one is ever going to get anywhere writing a "jazz novel." After all, Hamlet isn't a "Danish-royalty play", nor is Moby Dick a "sailor novel." The idea is to start with people, and then when you put them into a particular time and setting and group of circumstances they'll still be people: plausible, real-type people, capable of making you give a damn about what they do and what is done to them. That is what literature is supposed to be about. I know they teach this very early in all the writing courses, and it's quite elementary. So won't someone tell me why it is that when a writer gets onto that fabulous, colorful, riotous, pulsating Thing Called Jazz, he almost always turns out one kind of nonsense or another about a contrived and preposterous collection of non-people? And when is someone who has some knowledge and understanding of jazz—and therefore is qualified to relate properly the specifics of the jazz setting to the universalities of life—going to write a novel you can read without squirming.

Actually, there have been a couple of nearly successful efforts: Henry Steif's 1941 *Send Me Down*—long out of print; Harold Sinclair's *Music Out of Dixie*; and even, to some extent, Dorothy Baker's pioneering but long overpraised 1938 romanticism, *Young Man with a Horn*. But the percentage is woefully tiny.

Anyway, I don't really expect answers to my why and when questions. I'm only asking, sullenly.

Orrin Keepnews

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JAZZ IN PRINT

by NAT HENTOFF

Max Harrison in the Jazz Journal on the Modern Jazz Quartet's most recent British tour: "Another new facet is the occasional fragmentation of melodic lines particularly in theme statements. The themes of Django, It Don't Mean A Thing, Confirmation and especially Yardbird Suite are broken up and presented a bar or two or a time on different instruments. In It Don't Mean A Thing the theme chorus even has several different tempos. This melodic discontinuity may be an unconscious result of Lewis' regard for Webern and his pointilliste method of orchestration..."

Benny Green, jazz reviewer for the British Sunday Observer set off a fierce controversy with his review of a London Modern Jazz Quartet concert. The piece was headed, Victorian Blues, and among Green's points were: "...for the past five years four men have sought with painful eagerness to transform the racy art of jazz into something aspiring toward cultural respectability. The photographs on the covers of their best-selling

albums show three bearded and one bespectacled man in morningcoats, looking at the camera with the studied gloom of four eminent Victorians who have just heard about 'The Origin of Species.' The attempt of their pianist, John Lewis, to make jazz socially respectable is an excellent idea. Better morning-coats and gloom than tales of Al Capone and bootleg days. The snag is that this courting of respectability has drained away so much of the vitality of their music... My own feelings coincide with those of a fellow-musician I met later on Waterloo Bridge. 'It suddenly occurred to me,' he said, 'that there were three thousand of us sitting there watching a man with a small beard hit a small bell with a small stick.'"

Wrote Nicholas K. J. Bolton to the Observer: "Perhaps he would like a man with a big beard hitting a large bell with a big stick. In this way he would be saved the inconvenience of listening to the music." Noted Pärn Taimsalu of Imperial College Union: "It is true that the dynamic range of

the MJQ, as compared with some big bands, is limited, and is thus, perhaps, not well suited to performances in large auditoria, but even so it sometimes shows astonishing power — as, for example, the characteristic 'eruptions' in so much of their music. The dynamic range of the harpsichord is practically nil; nevertheless it is a wonderfully expressive instrument, as is the M.J.Q..."

British blues expert Paul Oliver is due in America this summer. His itinerary will probably include New York, Detroit, Chicago, Memphis, Houston, Birmingham, Atlanta, Raleigh, Washington, and the Mississippi area. Any readers in those areas can help Oliver contact blues singers and players are invited to contact Oliver at 20 Ashburnham Avenue, Harrow, Middlesex, England. As of this writing, Oliver's book, Blues Fell This Morning, was due for British publication in March. Official Films, which sells to the owners of 16mm machines, now has a sale on One Reel Soundies (100 feet): Gene Krupa's Orchestra (Let Me Off Uptown); Louis Armstrong (Shine); Fats Waller (Honeysuckle Rose and another of Ain't Misbehavin'); Louis Armstrong (Sleepy Time Down South), and others.

Jazz dancer Baby Lawrence is finally going to be recorded by Herb Abramson's new Triumph Records... Ross Russell's novel, The Hipsters, is due from Rinehart in July. ...Scheduled for April on the Duell, Sloan & Pearce list is a book that, if well done, has long been needed: Folksingers and Folksongs in America: A

Handbook of Biography, Bibliography, and Discography by Ray M. Lawless... Last year the same firm published Alan Lomax's Southern documentary The Rainbow Sign, which hasn't received the attention it merits.

In the December, 1959 issue of American Anthropologist, there's an important article by Alan Lomax on Folk Song Style that summarizes his research so far on what he feels are the ten or more musical style families in the world and how they're affected by the mores of the community. Although he doesn't spell it out, his theory has definite applications to jazz singing style.

buying... John Hammond, chairman of the Music Committee of the Urban League of New York, writes in a special report by the League attacking segregated AFM locals: "Another aspect of this situation is the resistance of white contractors (hiring agents) to the integration of AFM locals. Unfortunately these contractors have a dual role as employers and union members, and exercise a powerful and baleful influence on the operation of many locals... Since these contractors are union members and subject to its jurisdiction, the union has a responsibility to insist on their adherence to fair and equitable practices in the music industry." The same report had a list of all the segregated locals in the country. For copies, write Sy Posner, Urban League of Greater New York, 204 West 136th Street, New York 30, N.Y.

In another report, the

Urban League reported that more Negroes are being hired for theatre and classical orchestras in New York. The openings are a direct result of the widely publicized League report in November, 1958 exposing the segregated patterns in New York hiring practices in those areas.

Music 1960, the well-prepared Down Beat annual, contains excerpts from a symposium on the future of jazz chaired by John Mehegan with Gunther Schuller, George Russell and Bill Russo as participants. Said George Russell: "One critic recently extolled the Negro as the most vital force in American life, and I think this is ridiculous. I don't think the Negro wants to be 'the most vital force in American life'; he just wants an equal chance, which in some areas he already has, not to compete with but only to live in our mad society as Americans. I think a guy (who takes this most-vital-force position) is very superficial." Russell went on: "I think the critics should really take stock of themselves. I really think a new music is coming in the 1960's, and I'd like to see a type of critic capable both emotionally and technically of understanding what is happening in music. To me, he hardly exists today. It seems like they have special interests... They have a very superficial knowledge. Now maybe I'm overestimating their influence on the public. Probably I am."

The first extensive survey I've seen on the socio-economic backgrounds of Negro blues is the

excellent series, Voyage Au Pays Du Blues by Jacques Demetre and Marcel Chauvard, which began in the December, 1959, Jazz-Hot. So far, New York and Chicago have been covered.

Our Knowledgeable Young Novelists: From Roy Doliner's first novel, Young Man Willing (Scribner's) — "...Look, it's like the Land of Oz in there. And like the Grand Wizard is poor old dead Charlie Parker. The Bird. You know about the Bird?... [He played] tenor sax. And he wasn't a tenor sax man. He was the tenor sax man. He was the daddy of the whole beat mess."

And it was Allen Ginsberg who taught him how to play that tenor, dad.

In doing research for a Simon and Schuster book on American musical theatre, Nat Shapiro found this item in the May 14, 1929 New York Herald. Maceo Pinkard had just produced the show Pansy, and Percy Hammond wrote in the Herald that "mitigating the show's discomforts was Miss Bessie Smith, who, they say, is the Aunt Jemimah of the radiolas and dictaphones. A dusky and bulky song-shouter, Miss Smith shook her ample person in jungle quivers accompanied by a large and unmusical orchestra." Although the language would be different now, drama critics are still way out of their field when reviewing musicals.

The first issue of Les Cahiers du Jazz is out 3, rue de l'Echelle, Paris 1). There's an article by French trumpeter Roger Guerin on Louis Armstrong's style and one by M.-C. Jalard on Django and the gypsy school of playing.

There are enough other provocative features to warrant subscribing if you reach French...The Sunday Times (London) has issued a paperback of A Basic Record Library including Iain Lang's Fifty Basic Jazz Records...Best novel yet on the narcotics life is Clarence Cooper's The Scene (Crown)...George Avakian has produced and released at his own expense a six-LP recording (monaural or stereo, \$25) of the 25-year Retrospective Concert of the Music of John Cage recorded in performance at Town Hall on May 16, 1958. It's available by writing Avakian at Box 374, Radio City Station, New York 19, N.Y. Notes Virgil Thomson in the Saturday Review: "The present recording, with its excellent notes, gives an ample view of a striking personality who is also our most 'far out' composer." Largest collection of literature on the Negro — the largest available to the public — is the Schomburg Collection, New York Public Library, 103 West 135th Street, New York...Bill Coleman signed a three year contract with German Polydor and his sessions will be released in America on Bob Thiele's Hanover label...Murray Kempton in the New York Post: "It takes only one trip to the Newport Jazz Festival — the gentry in the front row with their Martini shakers, the sailors squatting in the back, their heads between their knees, upchucking their beer — to remember what a weird mixture is Miles Davis' world. Was ever anything in America at once so fashionable and so squalid?...André Previn in an interview with

Ralph Gleason in the San Francisco Chronicle: "I never get hung up between jazz and the classic while improvising and I'll tell you why. Because the necessary unevenness of jazz playing helps. If you bring the classical pattern to jazz, you wind up in a wholly different rhythm and the result is that you stop swinging. The position of the hands is different, too. In classical you reach in deep, after every note all the way and you hold your hand...with the fingers curled so it's all right there. But in jazz you skim along more and hold the fingers flat...so you can go either way. It takes time to flex your muscles after playing classical piano..." In the Village Voice (New York), the following ads offering instrumental instruction appear one after the other: Jazz Trumpet, Don Ferrara, WA 4-4773; Jazz Improvisation, any instrument, Lee Konitz, CH 3-8542; Jazz Piano, Sal Mosca, MO 7-8451...I agree with James Lyons' plaint in American Record Guide about the new classical record critic for Harper's: "Who is 'Discus' in Harper's? This kind of anonymity is infuriating; what good is criticism if you have no idea of the critic's identity?"...Down Beat fortunately has started identifying its reviewers. Ideally, the best reviewers are those with thorough musical backgrounds. But there are egregious exceptions — men with the musical knowledge but small conception of what criticism is. An example is Down Beat's relatively new reviewer, Don DeMicheal. ...Symphony Sid on WEVD,

advertising Ornette Coleman for a Town Hall concert: "Some of the greatest people in the country dig them very much."

As J. Robert Oppenheimer was saying the other day...

Pete Johnson's ill and needs bread. His address is 171 Broadway, Buffalo 4, New York...

Lucky Thompson told a Melody Maker reporter that he plans to settle in Mali, West Africa. Mali is French and includes Senegal and the French Sudan. "I was invited," said Lucky, "to Dakar to meet government officials. They asked me to settle in the country, develop its music, and organize the conservatory. I think I shall accept." Edmond Hall has given up his plans meanwhile to settle in Ghana. Couldn't interest the local musicians in jazz.

Blues Research No. 2, published by Record Research, provides discographical information on the Peacock, Duke, Progressive Jazz, and Char labels. There's also a list of new Southern labels...The best of the German jazz magazines seems to be Jazz Podium, Stuttgart-W, Vogelsangstrasse 32...Dobell's Record Store in London has a Lightnin' Hopkins album that is available, so far as I know, nowhere else. It's called The Rooster Crowed in England. Dobell's is at 77 Charing Cross Road, London, W.C. 2...Gerry Mulligan's new big band debuts at Basin Street East at the end of March...Irwin Silber has a useful article on Folk Songs and Copyrights in the February-March Sing Out (121 West 47th Street, New York)...

the word JAZZ

This is the first in a series of five articles on the origin and history of the word "jazz" as reported in the literature from 1917 through 1958. A bibliography will be published of all the references cited in these articles with the final installment.

jazz

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jazz

Fradley H. Garner and
Alan P. Merriam

Does the word "jazz" come from Africa, Arabia, the Creole, Old English, Spanish, the American Indians, the name of a mythical musician, an old vaudeville practice, association with sex and vulgarity, or onomatopoeia?

Is it "suggestive of things unpleasant, of atavistic leanings of which we are all properly ashamed, of borrowings from savages, of near-orgies that have quite properly been combatted by those who have care of the young and the morals of youth"?

Should it be dropped in favor of some such euphemism as "ragtonia," suggested thirty-five years ago in *Etude* magazine; or "crewcut," awarded \$1,000 grand prize in a contest to rename the music ten years ago by *Down Beat*?

We think not. Jazz, said or played, is here to stay as long as the spirit swings. While the years have gradually toned down the opposition, the little four-letter word has picked up status from Novosibirsk to Newport. "Jazz" is stamped in gold on one of the push buttons of Telefunken radios. (Another push button on the same radios is labeled "Music.")

Where it came from and how it got here are the questions. Not just academic ones, either, considering the answers submitted by fifty-seven writers, critics, philologists, jazz and classical musicians and long-hair moralists over the last forty-two years.

Part I. Trans-language accounts

Until August 5, 1917, the record shows no one except Walter Kingsley cared; at least no one apparently had said anything for the record—not even Lafcadio Hearn, Kingsley's professed authority. The etymological Pandora's box was opened that day in the *New York Sun*. Under the headline, "Whence Comes Jass? Facts From The Great Authority On The Subject," the late Mr. Kingsley declared:

The word is African in origin. It is common on the Gold Coast of Africa and in the hinterland of Cape Coast Castle. In his studies of the Creole patois and idiom in New Orleans Lafcadio Hearn reported that the word "jaz", meaning to speed things up, to make excitement, was common among the blacks of the South and has been adopted by the creoles as a term to be applied to music of a rudimentary syncopated type. In the old plantation days when the slaves were having one of their rare holidays and the fun languished some West Coast African would cry out, "Jazz her up," and this would be the cue for fast and furious fun. No doubt the witch doctors and medicine men on the Congo used the same term at those jungle "parties" when the tomtoms throbbed and the sturdy warriors gave their pep an added kick with rich brews of Luhimbin bark—that precious product of the Cameroons (Kingsley 1917:III, 3:6-7).

Kingsley's account was quoted at length in the August 25 *Literary Digest*, twenty days after it appeared in the *Sun*, and a year later *Current Opinion* reprinted it verbatim. Henry Finck, a music critic, referred to it in *Etude* magazine in 1924 and Henry Osgood, an opera critic and jazz chronicler, discussed it in *So This Is Jazz!* (1926), the first book about jazz published in this country.

A slightly reworked account was attributed to Lafcadio Hearn by George Newell in *Outlook* in 1928, by Stanley R. Nelson in 1939, by the French jazz historian Robert Goffin in his book, *Jazz: From the Congo to the Metropolitan* (1932), by Dr. Frank H. Vizetelly, a lexicographer, in a letter to *The New York Times* in 1934, and by others.

Forgetting Kingsley's somewhat curious juxtaposition of the then Gold Coast, the Congo and the Cameroons, the catch here is in the attribution to Hearn of the use of "jaz" by New Orleans creoles. Nowhere in Hearn's works could we find a single reference to the word or any word like it. Queries to Hearn scholars have drawn similar blanks. Professor John Ball of Miami University in Ohio wrote (May 2, 1958) that "After still further checking (and as I told you in Chicago, Carl Swanson, a Hearn collector from Lakewood, Ohio, has checked all his rare collection), I find no Hearn mention of 'jazz.'"

Kingsley never gave the source of his reference to Hearn. Nor did any of the writers who cited Kingsley's statement from the *Sun*. Unless Kingsley knew Hearn personally and got it first-hand, or unless a letter or document has gone unnoticed, this trail ends in a semantic quagmire.

Kingsley, though he may not have known it, however, had an ally of letters in Princeton. The following item appeared in the October 15, 1934 edition of *The New York Times*:

Some interesting etymological discoveries in an eight-year survey conducted by Professor Harold Bender of Princeton University, and a staff of eleven associates in preparing the edition of Webster's New International Dictionary, are described . . . It took three years to track down the origin of the word jazz, and he had to write more than 100 letters seeking information on the word. He found it to have come from the West Coast of Africa with the slaves imported to Colonial America. It became incorporated later in the Creole patois as a synonym for "hurry up" (Anon 1934:19:6).

Professor Bender's papers were about to be organized after his death on August 16, 1951, and his widow answered our letter to him. She disclaimed any knowledge of the hundred letters. No further reference was made to them in any professional or lay journal that we have seen. Meanwhile, at least one other scholar had carried the investigation a step above West Africa to Arabia, from whence, he claimed, "jazz" osmosed through the Dark Continent to the New World.

I submit a few words on music and musical instruments in the Western Sudan, through whose portals Islamic culture filtered to the various West and Central African peoples, from whom America obtained not merely the word **jazz**, but much of what it stands for. . . .

The term **jazz** . . . is derived from the Arabic **jaz**, a term used in the oldest Arabic works on prosody and music, and meant "the cutting off," "the apocope." It passed with numerous other Arabic musical terms and customs, to the peoples of the West Coast of Africa, to be handed on, in the course of time, to America (Farmer 1924: 158).

Henry George Farmer reported he had gathered this information during a period of research at the University of Glasgow in 1918-1920. Dr. Vize-telly supported the Arabian thesis in his letter of October 18, 1934 to the **Times**:

If one accepts the African source as correct, it may do no harm to point out that in Arabic "jazz" is vitriol; that one who allures or attracts is "jazib," and, by extension, "jazibiyah" means "charm, grace, beauty, loveliness"; also the power of attraction. It may not be amiss to cite the fact that in Hausa, an African language that resembles Arabic, "jaiza" is used to designate the rumbling noise of distant drums, or a murmuring as of discontented persons. In Arabic, "jaza" signifies "compensation or reward; also, complaint or lamentation." Arabic "jazb" connotes "allurement or attraction." In Hindustani, "jazba" expresses violent desire." Now, in view of the fact that the Arabs have always been known as great slave traders, is it not within the bounds of possibility that the term . . . ought to be labeled Arabic (Vizetelly 1934: 22:6).

Jacques Wardlaw Redway proposed a compromise. The **Times** on October 21, 1934, published his comments under the headline, "History of Term 'Jazz' Reviewed—Divergent Theories of Experts Are Thus Reconciled":

The peoples of the North African coast are not Negroes; they belong to the Semitic family and their language is closely allied to the Arabic tongue. Many of the words of each are almost identical. For several centuries there were migrations of North Africans into Southwestern Europe, resulting in an intermingling of the two people. Southwestern Europe is very darkskinned far into the Italian peninsula and even into Central Europe.

The African migrants into Europe carried their household words with them and implanted them in the speech of the people with whom they came in contact. As an instance, the prefix "guad" found in a score of words in the Spanish peninsula is an Arabic word meaning "water." The river Guadalquivir is the Arabic "Wadi-el-Kabir." The imported African words were carried along wherever migrants from the Spanish peninsula went—in detail, into the West Indies, and the still retain their Arabic earmarks. I am inclined to believe, therefore, that both Dr. Vizetelly and Professor Bender are correct (Redway 1934: IV, 5:2).

Arabia and West Africa were not even mentioned in passing by Peter Tamony, in his "Origin of Words," **San Francisco News Letter and Wasp**, March 17, 1939. Mr. Tamony said simply: "It is a Creole word and means, in general, 'to speed up'" (Tamony 1939:5).

Differences among scholars over the meaning of the alleged Arabic word "jaz" should be noted, as should the fact that some insist it is pronounced with an initial "h" sound, though spelled with a "j" in English.

The African theory may be acceptable on acculturative grounds (the Negroes brought the word as well as the rhythmic concept with them from Africa), but—for what it's worth—not one exchange student from West Africa nor a single scholar in African linguistics that we talked to ever heard of such an African word, let alone a word with similar meaning on the Guinea Coast.

Lest the French be slighted, one of the more believable accounts harks back to the French verb "jaser." In 1926 Irving Schwerke gave it vigorous endorsement — reservations about the future of the music notwithstanding. His article in the March 19 **Guide du Concert** was gleefully titled "Le Jazz Est Mort! Vive le Jazz!"

Le mot jazz est d'origine française et son application à la musique est la fidèle image de son sens littéral. Il y a 250 ans, la civilisation française trouva un solide point d'appui dans

les provinces (plus tard devenues États) de la Louisiane et de la Caroline du Sud. Dans les villes cultivées du Sud (la Nouvelle-Orléans et Charleston), le Français fut pour un certain temps la langue dominante, et, dans les plantations possédées par les Français, c'était la seule langue dont on usait. Les esclaves au service des Français durent obligés d'apprendre la langue de leurs maîtres, ce qu'ils apprennent, des inflexions et des modifications propres à leur race.

S'il faut en croire Larousse, le verbe français **jaser** signifie **causer, bavarder, parler beaucoup**. Dans la littérature française, **jaser** s'applique souvent à une conversation animée sur divers sujets, alors que tout le monde parle ensemble; et, souvent aussi, **jaser** traduit plus spécialement un 'chuchotement badin sur de petits riens' (Schwerke 1926:679).

There is nothing logically wrong with this explanation, which was cited again by James D. Hart in the journal **American Speech** in 1932 (1932: 245), by jazz critic Wilder Hobson in his book **American Jazz Music** in 1939 (1939:49), by Douglas Stannard in the **New Statesman and Nation** in 1941 (1941:83), by Frank Patterson in **Negro Digest** in 1947, and others.

There may even be a connection between **jaser**, "to chatter," and Kingsley's theory, endorsed by others, that "jazbo" and "jazz" have something to do with "speeding things up." Chapman, in **Down Beat** (Anon 1958a: 10), is quoted as saying that in French, "chasse beaux" means a "Gallic dandy." But a search of the literature fails to reveal any other references to "chasse beaux." Four other languages have been credited, one in 1935 by jazz writer Charles Edward Smith: "The word itself is not of African or French origin but is an old English word applied to Honky Tonk pianists as early as forty years ago" (Smith 1935:45), three others by Frank Vizetelly: "F. P. Vreeland traced it to the Africans, Indians and the Spaniards for the New York Times in 1917" (Vizetelly 1934:22:6). We have been unable to locate the Vreeland reference, even with the help of the **Times** library research staff. The trans-language accounts variously trace the word to Arabic, African, Creole, French, Old English, Indian and Spanish vocabularies. The last three probably can be dismissed *prima facie*; the Arabic and African explanations, while plausible, cannot be verified by West African nationals or linguistic scientists. The strongest case can be made for "jaser."

Reconsiderations / Jimmy Yancey

Except among a few record collectors boogie woogie is now largely a forgotten aspect of jazz. It was a kind of blues piano playing—most immediately characterised by the use of ostinato bass figures — that developed in the lumber, railroad and turpentine camps of the middle west in the latter years of the nineteenth century. The untrained pianists had at all times to work on poor, unresponsive instruments and developed a style that, although of considerable musical richness, lacked subtleties of touch and other refinements of execution. Travelling north with the migrations of Negro workers during the first world war it flourished in the obscurity of rent parties and bars in Chicago and other cities. In the 'thirties it enjoyed a brief, fashionable vogue with some of its most efficient exponents playing at concerts and at New York night clubs. Despite the apparent 'toughness' of its idiom boogie rather quickly deteriorated when removed from its natural surroundings. In the concert and night club atmospheres the playing of even such gifted men as Meade Lux Lewis and Albert Ammons became mechanical and empty.

Jimmy Yancey (1894-1951) seldom appeared at concerts or night clubs and his work retained the musical purity and freshness that his colleagues' playing eventually lost. Fortunately he made some records—it was one of the good things about the vogue that some of the best pianists in the idiom were recorded for the first time.

Initially Yancey's records may seem to reveal him as an individual but very limited musician. He lacked the inventive ability of Meade Lux Lewis nor did he have the technique that enabled Albert Ammons to produce such irresistibly powerful recordings as *Boogie Woogie Stomp*. His themes are comparatively few in number and it will be found, for example, that *Yancey Stomp*, *Janie's Joys*, *Midnight Stomp* and *Yancey Limited* are all based on the same material. Despite this Yancey was easily the most remarkable pianist to work in the boogie idiom and often achieved singular depth of expression. Superficially his recordings consist of strings of blues choruses that might equally well end one chorus shorter or go on

for two choruses more but, to the best of them, Yancey was able to impart an impressive degree of formal cohesion. And there is real mastery in the way he shepherded his rather small vocabulary of phrases so that the performance had a just balance of unity and variety.

State Street Special consists of seven medium tempo blues choruses in E flat. In the first five bars of the opening chorus the pair of right hand sixths on the lead-in are developed briefly to form an introduction to bars 6-12 which contain the solo's main material (Ex. 1). This material recurs, either in whole or in part, in the latter part of five of the six following choruses and thus *State Street Special* can be described as a kind of rondo. Yet the pianist is never content to repeat literally and in each instance some modification takes place. One of these variants is shown in Ex. 1A. It will be noted that where the right hand is unchanged the bass has been altered and usually to noticeable effect. Thus in the first bar of each example although the right hand is the same it has a somewhat different effect because in one case it is played over a heavy bass and in the other over a light one.

The left hand part in Ex. 1 shows the basic rhythmic pattern of the piece but, as can be seen from subsequent examples, it is subject to considerable modification. In the two final choruses a dotted-eighth and sixteenth rhythm is maintained throughout to give the performance greater momentum towards the close. It has been argued that with these variation in the bass patterns Yancey was really outside the normal confines of boogie. In fact while most exponents of the idiom maintained an unvaried left hand rhythm against which they threw a variety of right hand patterns Yancey integrated his hands so that one enhanced the effect of the other in a number of different ways. In any case some kind of ostinato was always the norm of his pieces and I think the truth is not that he was guilty of some kind of stylistic impurity but that he had more imagination than his fellows!

If the unity of this piece is achieved by the repetition of modified material its variety is to be found in the

The second commences with the repeated note motive shown in Ex. 2. This is the other principal idea of the piece. It lasts for four bars on its first appearance and is linked by a kind of interlude (bar 5) to the first repeat of the main material as shown in Ex. 1A. The third chorus is even more concerned with the repeated note motive, this time in octaves (Ex. 3) and it occupies bars 1 and 2, 5 and 6, and 9. Each of these sections is linked by contrasted material like that in bars 3 and 4 of Ex. 3. It is a further indication of the tightly-constructed nature of the piece that this 'interlude' material, besides providing contrast with the octave passages, is related to other parts of other choruses. The similarity between bar 4 of Ex. 3 and bar 7 of Ex. 1 will be noted and bars 7 and 8 of this chorus are almost identical with bars 11 and 12 of chorus number five. Nine bars having thus been taken up the material of Ex. 1 has to be telescoped. Yancey here employs bars 5-7 of Ex. 1A with slight alterations in the bass. In the fourth chorus this material appears at its normal length, commencing in the sixth bar. Chorus five introduces the triplet idea shown in Ex. 4 that, consisting as it does of the same three notes throughout, can be regarded as another variation of the repeated note idea. This lasts four bars and, as in chorus two, is linked to the customary chorus-ending with a contrasting interlude bar. The repeated note motive is further developed in the sixth chorus only here the notes are sustained instead of being repeated. Development centers round the alternation of tonic and flattened third—an exceedingly commonplace device that Yancey still manages to use to good effect. Ex. 5 shows bars 2-5 of this chorus. Bars 7-10 are made up of material similar in character to that of bars 3-4 and 7-8 of chorus three (see latter half of Ex. 3). It seems that the rondo character is to be lost here and the chorus end without any of the usual material but in fact Yancey telescopes the chorus-ending even more than in chorus three, reducing it to two bars and the final two bars of this sixth chorus consist of a repeat of the two final bars of the first chorus (Ex. 1, bars 6-7). The development of the repeated note idea reaches its climax in the seventh chorus where it appears in seconds, thirds, and sixths in the opening four bars (Ex. 6). The mate-

rial of Ex. 1 is not heard again and bars 5-10 consist of an extension of bars 7-10 of the preceding chorus. There is a two-bar coda.

It has already been said that *State Street Special* is a rondo but in fact it is something more. A rondo would have an A-B-A-C-A-D-A etc. form with B, C and D representing new music and A the repetition of the opening material. *State Street Special* is really A-B-A¹-B¹-A²-B²-A³-B³ etc. in which A (Ex. 1) is modied on each reappearance and B (Ex. 2) is subject to further development every time. This is more enterprising than simple rondo form and, but for the absence of modulation, could almost be described as a special kind of sonata-rondo. That this degree of formal organisation is present in a sequence of Yancey's blues choruses may surprise those unfamiliar with his work and it may be asked how such a musician, who worked in noisy bars and at rent parties, became concerned with the formal problem. This is a problem all solo jazz pianists have to face but blues players have devoted less attention to it than most and in Yancey's case we may guess it was to some degree unconscious at first. Yet while at a rent party he might improvise on a number for half an hour and produce a performance that really was nothing more than a string of twelve-bar units, he probably felt the need to give a degree of balance and unity to his ideas. Working on his themes over the years he gradually moulded his soles into the relatively elaborate formal patterns exemplified by *State Street Special*. This is obviously a form of composition and a study of Yancey's work, as of that of so many other jazzmen, shows us that composition and improvisation are not really such discrete and separate processes and that composition plays a larger part in jazz than is still generally realised. Much of the emotional force of Yancey's work derives, then, not only from the intrinsic quality of his ideas and personal nuances of his playing, but also from the skill with which the ideas are deployed through varied repetition, contrast and development.

—Max Harrison

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Example 1



Example 1a



Example 2



Example 3



Example 4



Example 5

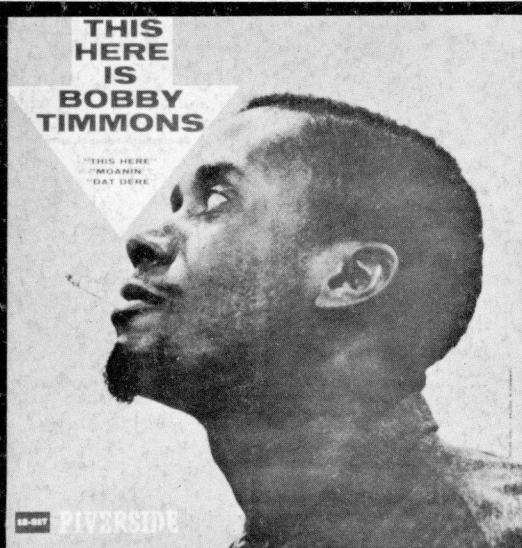


Example 6





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