

THE

JAZZ

REVIEW

*Volume 3 / Number 4 / May 1960 / Fifty Cents*

CANNONBALL  
KING OLIVER  
THE JAZZTET



we're proud to say...

# Barney Kessel

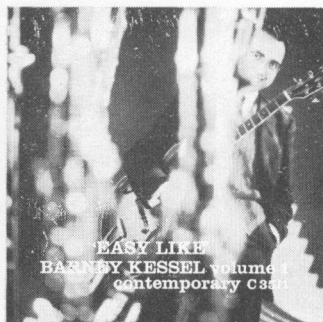
first place 1956, 1957 and 1958 Down Beat,  
Metronome and Playboy polls

# records for

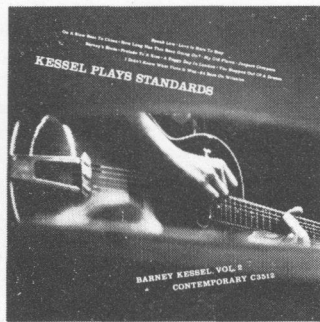
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# Contemporary

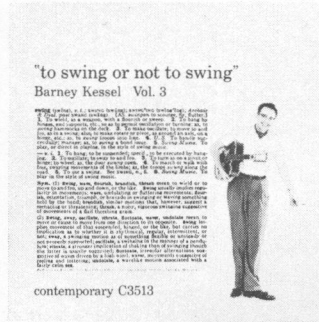
—and has since 1953!



Barney's first CR album, with Bud Shank or Buddy Collette featured on alto sax & flute, Red Mitchell, Claude Williamson, Shelly Manne, etc. C3511



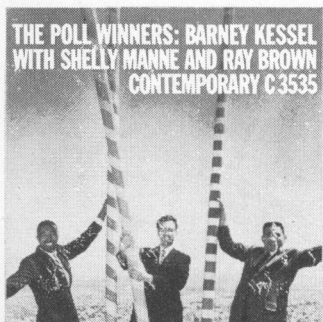
Barney & quintet featuring Bob Cooper, oboe & tenor sax, on 12 favorites like *My Old Flame*, *Speak Low*, *Love Is Here To Stay*, etc. C3512



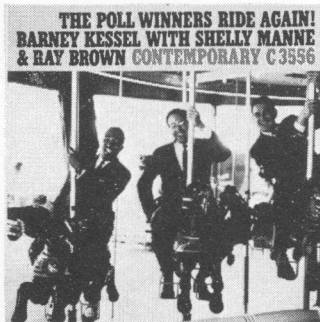
Barney in a free-wheeling session with "Sweets" Edison, Bill Perkins, Georgie Auld, Red Mitchell, Jimmie Rowles, Shelly Manne, etc. C3513



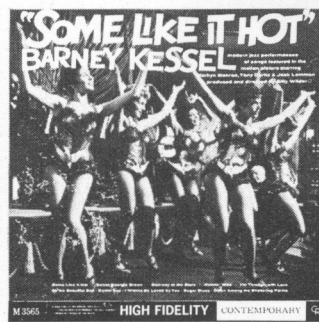
Barney and his arrangements of standards for woodwind orchestra. *Laura*, *Makin' Whoopee*, *Carioca*, *Indian Summer*, etc. C3521 & Stereo S7001



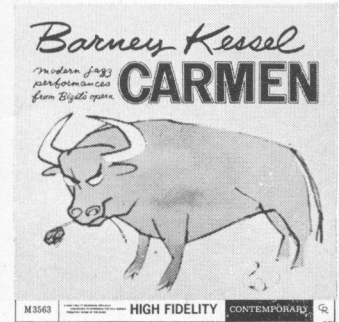
Barney, with Shelly Manne & Ray Brown (who also were 1st in the '56, '57, and '58 Down Beat, Metronome, Playboy polls). C3535 and Stereo S7010



Barney, Shelly and Ray again demonstrate their supremacy. *Volare*, *Be Deedle Dee Do*, *The Merry Go Round Broke Down*, etc. C3556 and Stereo S7029



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## LETTERS

### PERSONNEL PROBLEM

In regard to Mr. Ira Gitler's review of the Miles Davis discography by Jorgen Grunnet Jepsen.

First, Kenny Dorham never recorded with the Eckstine band; the personnel listed was given by Billy Eckstine himself and published in *The Discophile* some time back!

Josh Jackson is **Josh Jackson** and he plays tenor sax on the recording listed; **Josh** also recorded with Louis Jordan on Decca. **John Jackson**, alto sax, was on some earlier Eckstine recording before Miles joined the band.

As in the Ellington discography there are a few minor typographical errors, which are partly my fault, for I sent information to Mr. Jepsen, when we first started compiling these discographies.

Below is the correct information on the Herbie Fields Savoy.

**Snooky Young** (tp); **Al Hayes** (tb); **Herbie Fields** (as, ts); **Manny Albam** (bs); **Milt Buckner** (p); **Billy Mackel** (g); **Charlie Harris** (b); **Freddy Radcliffe** (d).

5774 *Jumpin' For Savoy* Sav 560

5775 *How Herbie Feels* —

5776 *Mel's Riff* Sav 540

5777 *Buck's Boogie Woogie* —

New York, January 16, 1945.

**Fields** (as, ts); **John Mehegan** (p); **Al Casey** (g); **Slam Stewart** (b); **Lionel Hampton**, **Fred Radcliffe** (d).

5809 *OK Sarge* Sav 654

5810 *It's The Talk Of The Town* uniss.

5811 *Star Dust* Sav 654

5812 *Camp Meeting* (???) Sav 591

5813 *Run Down* (???) Sav 591

New York, May 4, 1945.

**Miles Davis** (tp); **Herbie Fields** (as); **Arnett Cobb** (ts); **Lionel Hampton** (pl); **Al Casey** (g); **Slam Stewart** (b); **Fred Radcliffe** (d).

5818 *Just Relaxin'* Sav 592

5819 *Run Down* (remake?) Sav 591

5820 *Camp Meeting* (remake?) Sav 591

5821 *Four O'Clock Blues* Sav 592

New York, May 6, 1945.

(Note: masters 5805-5808 are by Rubber Legs Williams; no trumpet.)

Miles once stated in *Down Beat* that his first record date was with Fields, but that he was too nervous to play, and only played in the ensembles, no solos.

**Ernie Edwards, Jr.**  
Los Angeles, Calif.

### HIPPY

Please remove my name from your mailing list. I've discovered a magazine which is much hipper than your—one which uses the term "mother" at least five hundred times per monthly issue: *The Ladies Home Journal*.

**Bob Freedman**  
Medford, Mass.

### BROADSIDE?

It was kind of Whitney Balliett to reveal that he is trying to make his readers hear what jazz is. Which readers would those be? Dizzy Gillespie, Pee Wee Russell, and the others he mentions, or the non-jazz audience alleged by Max Harrison? If Mr. Balliett is writing

for a jazz-oriented audience, why does he regularly take such pains to describe the personal appearance of the artist under review? Is it really necessary to write an insulting description of Erroll Garner for people who, if they haven't actually seen him in person, must have seen at least a thousand photographs of him?

Whoever Whitney Balliett *thinks* he is writing for, the fact is that his work is read by a general (as opposed to jazz-minded) audience, which naturally must include a few jazz enthusiasts as well as other interested parties. For one thing, the jazz reviews only appear every four weeks or so, and sometimes at even longer intervals than that. Very few jazz enthusiasts are going to take out a subscription to a magazine solely to catch a critic who isn't in it 75% of the time—especially if they aren't particularly interested in the rest of the magazine. Apart from a few people who happen to be jazz enthusiasts and regular *New Yorker* readers, it is the general reader who is on the receiving end of Mr. Balliett's articles, and it is for the benefit of this same reader that well-known musicians have their names prefaced by descriptions like 'the saxophonist', and that explanations of expressions like 'lay out' are given.

Mr. Balliett may feel that he is enriching the English language with words like 'thunk' (isn't 'thunk' the past tense of 'think?'), and maybe he is, but he still hasn't explained what a 'tufted' tone is, and if he should ever decide to do so, he might also explain what 'tweedy' chords are, or what 'snaky' emotion is. He should not assume that because he has great skill with words, his creations carry some kind of built-in explicitness. It's possible to know what a crab is, and what grapesot is (a grapesot?), and still fail to see the connection, or be enlightened by their use as an attempt at musical description. "Lester Young frequently turns the beat inside out, as if looking for change in it" is a very clever idea, I suppose, but what does it convey, apart from the fact that its author has been working hard?

"My style is . . . an attempt to describe music, an essential that has fallen largely into disuse," says Mr. Balliett. But you can't describe music this way, if at all. You can only try to get across to the reader what certain things sound like to you. Observations such as "the bass drum (in Bebop) . . . gives off a pinched, final sound, like a distant door slamming," and, "Sidney Catlett's cymbals . . . sound like curtains rustling in the breeze" may be very good as 'poetry', but from a musical point of view, the end result of this sort of writing can hardly amount to more than a catalog of insignificant irrelevancies.

**Peter Turley**  
New York City

# JAZZ IN PRINT



by NAT HENTOFF

Fred Ramsey's Been Here and Gone, a record of his Southern trips, will be published by Rutgers University Press in June. Pictures and text. Sam Charters, who has seen the proofs, regards it as the best book of its kind yet. ...Paul Oliver's book on "the meaning and content of the blues," Blues Fell This Morning, has been published in England by Cassell. A review will follow...Edith Fowke and Joe Glazer have compiled

Songs of Work and Freedom (Roosevelt University, Chicago, Labor Education Division.) Most of the vintage anthems are here with music and lyrics in a loose-leaf binding that is geared for piano racks. Talking Union, The Boll Weevil, Dark as a Dungeon - all the songs of my militant, ineffectual youth...The Louisiana State University Press, which is building a record as the publisher of the worst books on jazz (Stephen Longstreet's The Real Jazz Old and New appeared under its imprint) is now responsible for H. O. Brunn's The Story of the Original Dixieland Band. A couple of years ago, another publisher (also a university press) asked me to read the manuscript, and I strongly advised against their publishing it. I feel the same way now. The book reads as if Louis Armstrong and King Oliver had never existed and that the derivative ODJB was a focal unit in the evolution of jazz. How about Earl Long on Martin Luther King for the Louisiana University

Press' next list?  
The Newport Youth Band ostensibly is primarily an educational undertaking, but education for what? I cite this Billboard review of their Coral single of Jazz Me Blues: "The young jazz ork turns to a rock arrangement on this catchy theme..." Is Marshall going to try a rock arrangement of 'Round Midnight soon?...Cashbox reviews Paul Clayton's Monument single of This Land Is Your Land as a "fine inspirational-patriotic oldie." The trade didn't always say that when the Weavers used to sing it. Not generally advertised are Victor's Gold Standard series of \$1.29 EPS: Ellington's I Got It Bad and three other tunes; Fats Waller's Your Feet's Too Big and three others; and Great Theme Songs, including Artie Shaw's Nightmare...Jet reports: "A new law forbids the beating of tom-toms and the holding of tribal dances on public days in the West African French-associated Dahomey Republic. From now on, citizens who wish to beat tom-toms must apply for a special permit." Washington Square, yes, but Congo Square? Said Dinah Washington to Ralph Gleason in the San Francisco Chronicle: "...Billie Holiday was a great influence on me. I had two of her records when I was a kid and almost wore them out. I used to listen to them over and over. She was wonderful. I didn't know her then; later when I got to know her, she helped me. She was a great singer."  
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## NEW CONTRIBUTORS

Ray Ellsworth, a former reviewer of concert music for **Down Beat**, did not make the jazz scene in time to hear Hoke Smith playing stride piano at Lil's Place in Great Post, Texas before Jelly Roll Morton was born.

Jack H. Batten is an attorney practicing in Toronto, Canada and a longtime follower of jazz.

# THE

# JAZZ



Minor Hall/ Honore Dutrey/ King Oliver/ Lil Hardin/ David Jones/ Johnny Dodds/ Jimmy Palao/ Ed Garland.  
California/ 1921.

## KING OLIVER

### A VERY PERSONAL MEMOIR

Dr. Souchon was born and raised in New Orleans in, as he puts it below, "the citadel of white caste privileges". In 1901, at four, he was captivated by the music, soon to be called jazz, that he heard in the city streets. His reminiscences of one man who played that music are probably unique in jazz writing for they not only tell us about Joe Oliver, they give us insight into how it felt then, and how it feels now after over fifty years for a man so born, so raised and still living in the city of his birth, to have been so captivated.

Edmond Souchon, M.D.



Courtesy Duncan Schiedt



Charles Jackson/ Clifford 'Snags' Jones/ Buster Bailey/ King Oliver/ Zue Robertson/ Louis Armstrong/ Lil Armstrong/ Rudy Jackson. Chicago/1924.



Baby Dodds/ Honore Dutrey/ King Oliver/ Louis Armstrong/ Bill Johnson/ Johnny Dodds/ Lil Armstrong. Chicago/ 1922-3.

Bert Cobb/ King Oliver/ Bob Shoffner/ George Filhe/ Bud Scott/ Paul Barbarin/ Darnell Howard/ Albert Nicholas/ Barney Bigard/ Luis Russell. Chicago/ 1925.



Courtesy Dr. Edmond Souchon



Three ages of Dr. Souchon.

This is a memoir about a great musician, Joe Oliver. It begins in the molten period of a magnificent American art before Oliver's star had begun its ascent. It is written by a surgeon who, by the fortunes of birth, came to life within the citadel of Southern white caste privileges and who has reached middle-age following the main course of the wonderfully proud, prejudiced and all-too-human oligarchs (the books have called them so) who were his forebearers. But it also springs from a turbulence of honest feelings from the heart and mind of one who, regardless of birth, luck, privileges, place or time, was fortunate enough to hear the great Joe Oliver blasting the heavens and shaking the hackberry leaves in funeral parades through the fringes of his neighborhood.

A rather pampered and sheltered child I was, arrayed in the ridiculous trappings of that Little Lord Fauntleroy era of "Southern aristocracy" which now seems unbelievable. So I was dressed—in about 1901-2 at the age of four or five—when my Negro nurse first took me walking into the dense Negro neighborhood to hear Joe Oliver play. The impact of this experience—the power and beauty of that music—has never left me. I followed the career of this New Orleans artist with a fidelity at least as great as that which I gave to medical faculties or to the gentle pomp and circumstances of my pri-

vileged world.

Surrounded by my corduroy breeches, knee-high leather leggings, stiff starched Lord Fauntleroy collar with soft flowing tie, I suddenly found myself relegated to the care of Armotine. All that was missing from my picture was a foreign governess who spoke several languages. In her stead was Armotine, Tine to me. Thank God she was colored, or this story could never have been.

Tine was many-faceted. She was my boss, my instructor, and my protector. She was also the most interesting person to cross my life up to that point. Undoubtedly, she was one of the finest cooks in the city of New Orleans. When starting to prepare the evening meal, she would keep her eye on my play in the side yard beneath her kitchen window. The ritual of a spicy **fine herb** sauce or the preparation of a **roux** for **grillarde** was accompanied by hours of never ending song. Her deep contralto was clear and soft, with a rhythm that often made me stop playing to listen and pat my foot. Her songs were and admixture of Creole folk songs, church hymns, and up-to-date hits of the late '90s or early 1900's. One refrain she repeated so often that I remember the words perfectly. It went:

"Ain't that man got a funny walk,  
Doin' the 'Ping-Pong' 'round Southern park.  
Nigger man, white man, take him away,  
I thought I heard them say."

There were innumerable verses to this song. Tine would shush me if I started to sing any of the less refined ones along with her. And there was another song which she seemed to like almost as well as the first. I always sang it for people if I was certain they would not go tell my mother; I knew I could always get a laugh, although I hadn't the slightest idea of its meaning.

I have learned many verses to this song since then, but I still like the one Tine taught me the best:

"I'm Alabamy bound, I'm Alabamy bound,  
I'm Alabamy bound,  
And if you want my cabbage patch,  
You gotta hoe the ground."

Every afternoon, Tine would take me for a walk, either up or down St. Charles Avenue, seldom on the side streets. Occasionally, when she fancied she needed something very special for preparing dinner, Mom would grant me permission to accompany Tine to Terrell's Grocery on First and Dryades. By coincidence (or was it?) a thrilling thing happened every time we went to Terrell's Grocery; Tine's intuition, or the grapevine, passed the word along. Invariably, the most exciting parade went by. And always Tine and I marched along with a long black wagon, ac-



accompanied by men in tinselled uniforms, plumed hats and sabers. A hundred kids my age skipped along. There were plenty grown-ups too, following on the sidewalks and in the streets. I never got tired, even when I missed my afternoon nap.

Someone mentioned that the heavy man playing that short, stubby, instrument at the head of the band was working for a family a few houses down the street from ours. He was their butler-yardman, and only played music on his time off. I did not understand all this at all. Everybody seemed to love this man. Somehow I thought that possibly I did too. That man was Joe Oliver.

By 1907, I had grown to the point where I was taking street cars all by myself and making my way around the city, and a few months before Tine's death, I heard one of her friends tell her that "Joe Oliver was playing at a cabaret down in the district." My heart beat fast. I had not heard him in a long time, and I missed his music. I knew that the "district" was spoken of vaguely and in whispers. It was a place where no "nice people" went. Maybe I heard mention of it because my mother's sister had married an alderman who had passed the law restricting a certain element (the prostitutes) to this area.

I learned that kids were never allowed in that section of the city, but that newsboys were an exception, tolerated "along the fringe" but not in the main streets. Afraid to venture on my escapade alone, I prevailed on one of my more venturesome pals to accompany me. We dug up the oldest clothes we could find, tore them in many places, and rubbed them in the dirt; a half dozen copies of **The Daily States** or the **New Orleans Item** under our arms, and the disguise was complete.

The "Big 25" where Oliver was playing was just one block from Basin Street, and about three quarters of a block from Canal. The time was just after dusk. Our objective was reached without so much as a side glance of suspicion from the grown-ups along the way. The streets were practically deserted. But our hearts were in our throats! When we arrived, not one sound was issuing forth. We were crestfallen: the music started at 9 P.M.

A couple of Friday nights later we were at it again, this time after dark. Except for faint red lights that shone through half-drawn shutters and the sputtering carbon lights on the corner, there was not much illumination. We could see strange figures peering out through half-open doorways. A new cop on the beat immediately tried to chase us, but the peeping female figures behind the blinds came to our rescue. They hurled invective of such vehe-

mence—"Let them poor newsboys make a livin', you — — —" that he let us go. We told him we were only going as far as Joe Oliver's saloon to bring him his paper. It seemed to satisfy him.

We could now hear that music from half a block away; it probably would have taken more than one policeman to stop us. The place was twice as long as it was wide. It was a one story wooden frame building at sidewalk level, lengthwise parallel to the street. There was a bar at the Iberville end, and a sort of dance hall to the rear, nearer Canal Street. Quick glances through the swinging doors showed us that the inside was fairly well lighted. But outside the building there were many deep shadows, and the sputtering carbon arc-light on the corner was out more than on. Gutters three feet wide and almost as deep ran alongside the sidewalk. A tall telegraph pole stood just in front of the dance hall, across the gutter. In its shadow we sought refuge until someone discovered us and told us to move on. After listening to the music for almost an hour and a half, with reluctance we turned homeward. That trip was just the beginning. We came there many Friday nights. They got to know us and hardly noticed that we were there. We sat on the gutter's edge, our feet dangling, and drank in that sound.

Sometimes Oliver would come outside for a breather. We wondered how we might approach him to get him to say a few words to us. Finally, I ventured, "Mr. Oliver, here is the paper you ordered." I'll never forget how big and tough he looked! His brown derby was tilted low over one eye, his shirt collar was open at the neck, and a bright red undershirt peeked out at the V. Wide suspenders held up an expanse of trousers of unbelievable width. He looked at us and said, "You know damn well, white boy, I never ordered no paper." We thought the end of the world had come. Suddenly, we realized that he had not spoken loud enough for anyone to hear but us! Then he went on, much more friendly, "I been knowin' you kids were hanging around here to listen to my music. Do you think I'm going to chase you away for that? This is a rough neighborhood, kids, and I don't want you to get into trouble. Keep out of sight and go home at a decent time." We were in! We had really made it!

But gradually, the city law agencies and police began to adopt a tougher policy in the district. We thought it best that we quit. But, we tapered off; we couldn't stop all of a sudden.

Ten fast years went by. Then came Tulane University from 1913 to 1917. None of us had forgotten

Oliver, and the memory of his music. We were invited to the regular Saturday night "script" dances at the Tulane Gymnasium. For one dollar, you got yourself and your best girl in from eight to twelve. On the bandstand, surrounded by his entire band, was Joe Oliver! My bunch, jazz lovers all, scarcely missed a Saturday night for the next four years. There were seven of us who hardly danced at all, but surrounded the bandstand the whole evening. In retrospect, its hard to believe that we were so lucky. Gradually, we learned the player's names, and they learned ours. We got special kicks out of listening to the little drummer who quietly sang risque parodies on the tunes the band was playing. A bunch of white boys in the deep South, second lining with utter rapture to a Negro band! In those narrow times, such a thing was unheard of!

We were so imbued with the music, that as soon as the dance was over, and we had absorbed all we could, we'd go over to somebody's house and attempt to imitate on string instruments what Oliver's band had been doing on brass and woodwind. The fact that fifty years later, four of that same group still play together many of the old tunes which Oliver featured is evidence, I think, of how deeply the experience imbedded itself. It is also proof—to ourselves and to others—that we were actually there; it was no figment of our imaginations.

Then World War I. The district was closed by order of the Secretary of the Navy, and all the good musicians moved away. For us, France, back to America, and, for me, medical school. On graduation, I was in Chicago to finish a two-year internship. It was late 1924, I believe, that my passing all final exams called for special celebration. A party began to shape up. Someone heard us bragging about the great bands to which we had danced in New Orleans and informed us that in a black-and-tan joint on the south side the greatest jazz band of all times was currently playing. There was no further discussion.

Prohibition was at its maudlin height. The place was far from inviting from the outside, dingy and needing several coats of paint. Ancient paper decorations and faded flowers hung dejectedly from unpainted walls and peeling columns. A long, winding ill lit hallway seemed to take us in back of some large hotel or building. The place smelled of last week's beer. But the closer we got to the dance hall, the more excited we became. No one had mentioned the name of the band playing there, but it was only necessary for a few musical strains to meet us for us to realize that something familiar

was greeting us.

A rather pretentious floor show was in progress as we made our way to our table. A brilliant spotlight followed the performers on the dance floor, but gloom made the faces of the musicians undistinguishable. The bandstand supported about ten chairs, and the musicians were decked out in tuxedos or dress suits (I am not sure which) with much tinsel and fancy braid. A heavy man was their leader, and he was following the cues of the dancers and singers. The floorshow star that night was Frankie "Halfpint" Jackson.

Suddenly we realized we were looking at someone on the bandstand who greatly resembled Joe Oliver. We could hardly wait for the floor show to stop, so the lights would go up for dancing.

It was Oliver alright. But his was a much more impressive figure now. The transition from the red undershirt and suspenders of Storyville's "Big 25" to the clean white shirt at the Tulane gymnasium to the formidable figure he now presented, was almost too much to believe! He was now "King", the most important personage in the jazz world, surrounded by his own hand-picked galaxy of sidemen. His cordial welcome to two old New Orleans friends almost made us ashamed of the lumps in our throats—the same lump I had had when, in newsboys' clothes, we offered him a newspaper. His affability that night equaled his kindness to us youngsters who had braved the terrors of Storyville to hear him play.

The turmoil and excitement which was going on around us in that speakeasy was nothing compared to what was going on within our hearts. The realization of the very privilege which had been ours over these 30 years suddenly burst on us. Joe Oliver is long dead. His body lies in an almost unmarked grave. I have all the records he ever made. These are brittle and fragile. The Big 25 has been torn down. I've taken pictures of that, but these too are perishable. What remains for me is the **sound** of Joe Oliver. Perhaps auditory memory is better than visual. It is easy for me to recall many, many tunes which the Oliver band played in the very early days at Big 25. Maybe when our first venturesome escapades into Storyville were going on, we were too excited—perhaps not interested—we do not recall one name at Big 25 other than Joe Oliver. But the tunes, yes!

At Tulane, it was different. Every man in the band was known to every one of us. Names such as Johnny Dodds, Sidney Bechet, Johnny St. Cyr, Kid Ory, Baby Dodds, Pops Foster, Tilman Braud, Armand J. Piron, Clarence Williams, Steve Lewis.



There were many others, too, in Joe's Tulane groups, for personnels varied from week to week. But the sound of the band remained just as thrilling with each group. And Joe Oliver was always there, or the band wouldn't have been hired. And the tunes they played were always the same.

I believe without fear of memory-tricks that by the time Oliver was playing at Tulane gymnasium, he had acquired a technique that was much more smooth, and that his band was adapting itself to the white dances more and more. At Big 25 it was a hard-hitting, rough and ready, full of fire and drive. He subdued this to please the different patrons at the gym dances. It is easy to recall this when I recall a transition which one of jazz's most popular tunes underwent. Sometimes, when Joe would be playing for a private party at a home or a ball, a midnight supper would be served to the guests. In order to get the couples into line and stop the dancing, Oliver was requested to play a march to which no one could dance. He would use **High Society**. It was played at a very slow, marching tempo, the same tempo his band used in marching funerals and processions. It was a shuffle, easy to walk to. And the first part seemed interminable, before he broke into the chorus which has immortalized Alphonse Picou. You couldn't even do a "slow drag" to it, as it was played then. Gradually, the tempo of this tune was quickened, and it was converted into a dance tune, almost the same as we know today; the 'transition' probably took three or four years!

Historians have often said that the early New Orleans bands entirely played almost an ensemble style, with few if any solos. I am afraid that I must disagree. However, the manner in which solos began finding their way into such bands as Joe Oliver's was without plan from the leaders or of the sidemen. Early New Orleans groups **were** trained to play ensemble almost entirely, with occasional 'breaks' for a particular instrument. But during parades and at dances the cornet or trumpet might get tired and without warning simply drop out. Or maybe he had blown a few bad ones, so he simply stopped playing and blew saliva out of his horn. Immediately, as he stopped, either the clarinet or the trombone took the lead—sometimes both instruments did this, playing unison lead. When the trumpet man decided his lip was rested, he resumed playing at any time and at any place in the piece. It was not those Chicago musicians, or the New Yorkers who first started passing it around; New Orleans did it, long ago.

The Chicago Oliver group was a magnificently drilled

band. Each member was a star, imbued with making the over-all sound of the band good. Each, too, was a fine soloist in his own right. But Joe Oliver saw to it that nobody outshone him. The sidemen's solos were few and shorter than those Oliver appropriated to himself. It was without doubt the very best music in Chicago at that time and, they still had that beat.

The records which I have, made during the Chicago stage and afterwards, seem to be collectors items, a yardstick by which the neophyte judges other bands, and which many attempt to copy. I disagree sadly that these are representative of Oliver at his greatest. By the time Oliver had reached Chicago and the peak of his popularity, his sound was not the same. It was a different band, a different and more polished Oliver, an Oliver who had completely lost his New Orleans sound.

Regressing in our discussion, and trying after fifty years to conjure up as fairly as a sexagenarian can do, I had these thoughts:

In Chicago Joe Oliver was at his most popular and polished, but he was already on the way out. Instead of realizing the treasure that was his in playing New Orleans music, he was trying to sound like a big white band!

Even at Tulane Oliver's style was beginning to change. It was still very great music, but something in the inner feeling of the band was shaking itself loose from the roots from which it had sprung. Perhaps playing together too often is the reason, for who can dispute that head arrangements, repeated night after night with the same musicians, can become just as deadly as the written score can? Perhaps it was a desire to "improve" (let's not use the word "progress").

There are no bands playing today whose sound faintly resembles that of Oliver's band at "Big 25". Jazz histories have many times told me whom I had been listening to in that bistro and possibly I now call up the sound of these men by suggestion; I doubt my own memory. We kids were not interested in who was playing in the band, as long as it was Joe Oliver's band. Even if I readily admit I knew the name only of Joe Oliver, I still have my complete and honest belief that this first Oliver I heard was the most thrilling. It was rough, rugged, and contained many bad chords. There were many fluffed notes, too. But the drive, the rhythm, the wonderfully joyous New Orleans sound was there in all its beauty. This is what the recordings made in Chicago missed. Those records even miss conveying the way that Oliver was playing in Chicago when I heard him.

# PAYING DUES

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## the education of a combo leader

### Julian 'Cannonball' Adderley

I had been in Florida after my first trip to New York to finish my teaching assignments. I formed my first band toward the end of 1955. Having worked in New York, I was—naively—sure that the best Florida musicians could meet the challenge of the major club circuit. I also had Junior Mance, an old Army buddy with the group. We had a few warmups in Florida, and then my manager, John Levy, booked us in Philadelphia. We had rehearsed two and a half weeks. We spent a couple of days in New York before hitting Philadelphia, and during that time my Florida men heard the New York musicians. Then, in Philadelphia, they also had to cope with the fact that Philadelphians like John Coltrane and Red Garland, home for the weekend, were standing around listening.

It was soon clear that being competent in Florida had nothing to do with New York competition. (In my own case, for example, guys who seemed to me to swing when I was in Florida no longer do.) By the second day in Philadelphia, John Levy decided to fire everyone. (This was January, 1956). Jack Fields, an ex-musician and then owner of the Blue Note, was also somewhat upset. I had gotten great response in that room on the way to Florida with Kenny Clarke, bassist Jimmy Mobley and pianist Hen Gates, but on the way back, I found out that you can't fool anybody in Philadelphia. Jack lent me some money, and I hired Specs Wright as drummer, but I had to keep the bass player for a while or give him two weeks' pay. He couldn't keep an even tempo on fast numbers so we had to stop playing fast things for a while.

We went on to Detroit and Cleveland for two weeks each, and when we got to New York, I eventually hired Sam Jones. We kept going for the rest of the year with a book based in large part on what my brother, Nat, and I wrote and some of the usual jazz standards. We began to record, but there were





problems at Mercury. The man then in charge of jazz there pretty largely decided what we recorded, who the arrangers would be, and who would publish any originals we brought in. I tell you frankly that I didn't know at that time that I could protest and I didn't at first go to John Levy with the problem. I had signed a five-year contract with the company and the options were entirely at their discretion. (I later found out the union wouldn't allow more than three-year contracts). At first, being unknown, I didn't even get any advances for my dates. Then there was a publicity splash of sorts, and they started that business about "the new Bird" which has plagued me ever since.

We were able to keep working fairly steadily through 1956. There was one stretch with two weeks off and various periods with a week layoff. We had come to New York with a little money and Nat and I both had cars, so that transportation was no problem. The sidemen were paid only when we worked; there was no one on retainer, so to speak.

I learned that year how important is to keep the books accurately and to keep accounts separate. We were getting about \$1,000 a week for five men. Out of that came \$150 commission for my manager and booking office, \$75 in union taxes a third of which we eventually got back, about \$125 in Federal withholding taxes and maybe another \$15 in social security taxes. Now we should have deposited the money due the government in a separate account every week. But after a while, we began spending that money because we also had gasoline bills, hotel bills (for ourselves, etc.). We were paying the sidemen \$125 out of which they had to pay their hotel bills.

By September of the next year, 1957, although we had been working steadily, we were about \$9,000 in debt. We had had no royalties from our recordings and had only made scale for making them. Besides, a lot of recording costs were charged against us which shouldn't have been. The band had not been particularly successful in that we had done about the same amount of business all the time. Very few clubs lost money on us, but they didn't make a hell of a lot either. That's another thing I've learned. A combo's price should be geared so that everybody can make money. If a leader can't make it except for a bigger figure than is wise for the club, he just shouldn't play that club. Some guys, once they become successful, double their price, but although we draw better now than we've ever done, I prefer to gear my price—in specific cases—to the room. I mean to men like Charlie Graziano at the Cork 'n' Bib who took chances on

me when I wasn't especially a draw. Some of the other musicians forget too quickly. A leader, by the way, doesn't have to depend on an owner's figures to tell how much business is going on. He can tell by the activity of the waiters and by seeing whether the people are drinking. A place can be packed, but if the waiters aren't busy, nothing's happening. It's very simple.

For example, there was a time when Miles drew a lot of one-beer drinkers. Chico Hamilton would come in, not draw as much, but an owner would make as much as money—then, not now—with Chico as with Miles because Chico drew more drinkers, and he cost \$1,000 less.

Anyway, we finally broke up that first band. After twenty months, we still couldn't get more than \$1,000 a week. At that time, Horace Silver was also scuffling; so were the Jazz Messengers (the group Blakey had with Bill Hardman) and Les Jazz Modes. Nobody was really making it except for Miles, Chico and Brubeck. I had gotten an offer from Dizzy to go with his small band. I was opposite Miles at the Bohemia, told him I was going to join Dizzy, and Miles asked me why I didn't join him. I told him he'd never asked me.

Miles had helped me when I first came to New York. He told me whom to avoid among the record companies, but unfortunately I didn't take his advice. Al Lion of Blue Note was one man he recommended and Miles also told me about John Levy. Miles began telling me something musically about chords, but I sort of ignored him. I was a little arrogant in those days. Then, about three months later, I saw an interview in which Miles had said I could swing but I didn't know much about chords. But by that time I'd begun to listen to Sonny Rollins and others, and I had realized I knew very little about chords. You can play all the right changes and still not necessarily say anything. Finally, I learned how to use substitute chords to get the sound I wanted.

Well, Miles kept talking to me for two or three months to come with him, and when I finally decided to cut loose in October, 1957, I joined Miles. I figured I could learn more than with Dizzy. Not that Dizzy isn't a good teacher, but he played more commercially than Miles. Thank goodness I made the move I did.

I was with Miles from October, 1957 to September, 1959. Musically, I learned a lot while with him. About spacing, for one thing, when playing solos. Also, he's a master of understatement. And he taught me more about the chords, as Coltrane did too. Coltrane knows more about chords than any-

one. John knows exactly what he's doing; he's gone into the melodic aspects of chords. He may go "out of the chord", so-called, but not out of the pattern he's got in his mind. From a leader's viewpoint, I learned, by watching Miles, how to bring new material into a band without changing the style of the band. And when it was necessary at times to change the style somewhat, Miles did it subtly so that no one knew it.

In a way, I suppose, I was a kind of stabilizing influence on the band. Two of the men he had—fine musicians—weren't always exactly on time or dependable. As in most groups, not all the sidemen made the same amount of money. When he heard I was going to leave, Miles did offer to guarantee me an annual salary of \$20,000, which was more than I was making.

Especially when he started to use Bill Evans, Miles changed his style from very hard to a softer approach. Bill was brilliant in other areas, but he couldn't make the real hard things come off. Then Miles started writing new things and doing some of Ahmad's tunes. When Philly Joe left the band, Miles at first thought Jimmy Cobb wasn't as exciting on fast tempos, and so we did less of those. And although he loves Bill's work, Miles felt Bill didn't swing enough on things that weren't subdued. When Bill left, Miles hired Red again and got used to swinging so much that he later found Wynton Kelly, who does both the subdued things and the swingers very well. Wynton is also the world's greatest accompanist for a soloist. Bill is a fine pianist, and his imagination is a little more vivid so that he tries more daring things. But Wynton plays with the soloist all the time, with the chords you choose. He even anticipates your direction. Most accompanists try to lead you. Red is another excellent accompanist. He fits well with the drummer always and doesn't leave you anything to do but go where you want to.

As for rehearsals, we had maybe five in the two years I was there, two of them when I first joined the band. And the rehearsals were quite direct, like, "Coltrane, show Cannonball how you do this. All right, now let's do it." Occasionally, Miles would tell us something on the stand. "Cannonball, you don't have to play all those notes. Just stay close to the sound of the melody. Those substitute chords sound funny."

I certainly picked up much advantage as a potential leader from the exposure of being with Miles. We differed somewhat about acknowledging applause, but he let us do what we wanted do. He really does care what the audience thinks, but he

just doesn't believe in bowing, etc. I feel it's O.K., so I smile or something. He **would** tell us to leave the stand if we had nothing to do up there.

As for polls and critics, from what I gathered while with Miles and as a leader, the polls as such have little effect on a musician, but they do have an effect on potential customers who don't know much about jazz. That's why the **Playboy** poll is probably the most important of them all, which is why I get disgusted with some of the results.

Economically, the reviews of critics in **The New Yorker**, **Saturday Review** or **Hi-Fi/Stereo Review** mean more than those in **Down Beat** or **The Jazz Review**. The musicians, however, respect the trade paper writers, by and large, more than the others. A review in **Playboy** means nothing in contrast to a vote for me in the Critics' Poll but it may mean more money eventually.

Getting back to the problems of being a leader, I had planned when I joined him to stay with Miles about a year. But I stayed longer. Miles was getting more successful and there was the business recession. I was functioning meanwhile as a kind of road manager—paying off the guys, collecting money. Meanwhile I'd been getting inquiries from club owners about when I'd start my own band again because they kept noticing the response when my name was announced. I told John Levy I'd try it again if he could get the group a minimum of \$1500 a week. Nat helped me in the recruiting. I gave him the list of the guys I'd contacted. John got about two months for us at \$1500 a week. We broke in at Peps in Philadelphia, then went on to the Jazz Workshop in San Francisco. To start with, we had about twelve to fourteen things in the book. It just happened to work out that we had several gospel-type numbers. Nat and I had some originals in the book, and we got more material from Duke Pearson of Atlanta, now in New York, and Randy Weston. The album we made for Riverside at the Jazz Workshop is the biggest seller I've ever had, and one big factor is Bobby Timmons' **This Here** in it. Bobby wrote the tune in San Francisco although he'd been working on it before. The tune sort of gave us a sendoff, and everything else seemed to fall in. The album went into five figures within five weeks. It has already sold more than all my Mercury albums combined—except for the string album.

Now we're booked into the summer, plan to go to Europe then and play the Cannes Festival, and come back for several of the American festivals. We haven't got it made yet though. I'm still looking for real security, but I haven't been able to figure out yet how to get it—not in this business.

# ***THE BLUES***

## **MILLION DOLLAR SECRET**

Now I'm gonna tell all you girls a secret, please keep it to yourself.  
Yes, I'm gonna tell all you girls a secret, please keep it to yourself.  
Now it's a million dollar secret, so please don't tell nobody else!  
Now if you're a real young girl, and you wanna get rich quick,  
Get you an old, old man, girl, and that'll be the lick!  
For old, old men are fine, yes, they really know just what to do,  
Now they'll give you lots of lovin', but they'll give you a whole lot of money too.  
Now he'll tickle you under your chin and crack you on your side,  
He'll say, "Wake up you fine young thing and give me my morning's exercise!"  
Oh, old, old men are fine, yes, they really know just what to do.  
Now they'll give you lots of lovin', but they'll give you a whole lot of money too.  
Now I've got a man, he's seventy-eight, and I'm just twenty-three,  
Everybody thinks I'm crazy, but his will's made out to me!  
That old man is fine, yes, he really knows just what to do,  
He'll give you lots of lovin', but he'll give you a whole lot of money too!

(Sung by Helen Humes on Jazz Selection 685.

Transcribed by Max Harrison.)

## **SIX, SEVEN, EIGHT OR NINE**

I've got misery, baby and I'm worried and blue  
I've got misery, baby and I'm worried and blue  
Yes, my life is a drag and it's all on account of you.  
You made me love you, baby; then you started playin' around  
You made me love you, baby; then you started playin' around  
I'm your white-horse ace in the hole, and also your clown.  
We got a housefull of Children, baby six, seven eight or nine  
We got a housefull of Children, baby six, seven eight or nine  
They're all runnin' round an yellin', and I don't know which one is mine.

(Sung by Hot Lips Page on Commodore 574.

Transcribed by Dan Morgenstern.)

## **THE SADDEST BLUES**

Mama, I rolled and I tumbled and I cried the whole night long,  
Mama, I rolled and I tumbled and I cried the whole night long,  
Well, I woke up this morning, didn't know right from wrong.  
The night she quit me, I walked right straight back home,  
The night she quit me, I walked right straight back home,  
Well, I rolled and I tumbled and I cried the whole night long.  
Now, you don't need to worry about me when I'm gone,  
Now, you don't need to worry about me when I'm gone,  
Well, you know you got the best beau(?), ain't gone do nothin' wrong.  
Well, I told my baby before I left that town,  
Well, I told my baby before I left that town,  
Baby, don't let nobody tear my playhouse down.

(By Memphis Slim. United Artists VAL 3050.

Transcribed by John Szwed.)



# Farewell to Jazz

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Ray Ellsworth

After I got my B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. from Juilliard School of Music, Nat Hentoff and Martin Williams agreed to let me subscribe to **The Jazz Review**.

So I got out my pipe and slippers, and settled down in my modest pad to read the first issue granted me under this more legitimate arrangement (previously I had to sidle up to a blind newsdealer, sneak a coin into his hand, and get the hell out of there), and the first thing my eye fell upon was the following paragraph:

"The implications from paragraph (3) run from nonchromatic unimodality into chromatic polymodality or pantonality. Note George (Russell's) contrapuntal building-up and dissolution; these harmonic lines (mono or homophonic) have become subject to control since Stravinsky laid down the **Petrushka** (?) chord (C-F#) in 1911. Take your choice; the interval between any two axis notes is consonant to less consonant from thirds to tritone and Schillinger has a four-fold harmonic correlation which specified the scales on any two axis notes as unitonal (or polymodal). (U-U, U-P, P-U, P-P). Schoenberg's use of the P5th down for his Shape Transpositions also reacts on this situation. So; the tonal gravities of complex patterns of chromatic modalization follow the laws of counterpoint (interdependent vertical and horizontal tonal spheres in motivic and rhythmic integration) and the permutations here may take as much as a century to work out."

I quietly laid aside my pipe, doffed my slippers, bought a hair shirt, and laid myself out on a bed of nails. Then I called Bill Schuman at Juilliard and asked him to take me back. On second thought, I called Bill again and told him to forget it; I just didn't have a century to spare. And would he give me a refund, please.

Thus my exit from the world of jazz.

Of course, I'd never really been **in** the world of jazz, but I'd always had hopes. Not as a performer, you understand—I didn't aspire to that Olympian height—but at least as a dedicated listener. One of the millions who lift that barge, tote that bale, and pay six dollars for a record.

I had come to jazz the usual way, up the Mississippi to Chicago, then over to New York, landing first in Harlem, and later on (with a side trip to Kansas City), 52nd Street and eventually (showing my diplomas at the door) Birdland. I knew all the beautiful legends. I also knew, of course, that they **were** legends—that jazz had not really begun in New Orleans and moved up the river (had not Leonard Feather heard Hoke Smith play stride piano at Lil's Place in Great Post, Texas before Jelly Roll Morton was born?—but just the same, I went along and loved the ride.

I was a conscientious fan. If Nat Hentoff demanded to know why Wilmer Fanchette had never been allowed to record an album of his own, I, too, demanded to know why Wilmer Fanchette had never been allowed to record an album of his own. I wrote to lp companies, haunted record shops, fixed my friends with a piercing gaze and demanded to know why Wilmer Fanchette **had never been allowed** to record an album of his own. And like all other dedicated jazz fans, when somebody finally **did** allow Wilmer Fanchette to record an album of his own (mono \$4.98; stereo \$5.98), I did not, of course, buy it. I let Nat Hentoff buy it.

I did my bit all down the years. When Benny Goodman swung at the New York Paramount, I jitterbugged dutifully in the aisles and took my broken leg and six months in the hospital without a murmur. When Stan Kenton's brass played sixteen choruses on **Peanut Vendor**, I put the pieces of my ear-drums into an envelope and carried on with stereo hearing aids. No one can say I didn't make an effort. I subscribed to **Le Jazz Hot**, **Le Jazz Cool**, **Le Jazz Lukewarm**, **Das Jassen Wunderhorn**, **Down Beat**, **Metronome**, **The Record Changer**, **Jazz Today**, **Jazz Yesterday** and **Jazz Tomorrow**. I bought the British-issued, seventeen volume discography of Charlie Barnet. I cleaned innumerable attics for innumerable relatives without charges, on the off-chance of locating a mint copy of a Beiderbecke or a LeRoy Carr. (Found some things, too. Bought them from my square relatives for ridiculous sums like ten cents a record. Eventually, I sold them, too

—for ridiculous sums like ten cents a record.)

I appreciated. I appreciated Duke, Diz, Bird, Jelly, Prez, Count, King, Fats, Punch, Satchmo, Buster, and Lightnin'. At least, I appreciated them until they got famous and didn't need to be appreciated anymore.

I made the concert scene—Carnegie Hall, Town Hall, all the scenes. Play any **Jazz at the Philharmonic** side and you'll hear me. I'm the guy down front by the mike, yelling "Go! Go! Go!" I was there. I made the Festivals, too. Man, they were the greatest! Newport, French Lick, Monterey, Playboy—the names alone bring back memories. Black Butte, Indiana—that was the one, though; better than Newport, man. But out of the way—on U. S. 86, a couple miles past Jack Filmore's Silo, on the turnoff toward Harlansville. Not many people knew about it. They had a giant Ferris Wheel at this one, and shot the Dukes of Dixieland out of a cannon. Pum! Pum! Pum! Just like that.

But I'm through with all that now. It was fun, and I never minded the hard knocks and the sacrifices. But life isn't simple anymore, and I can see that I'll never measure up. Much as I like to be on the scene, keep up with trends and appreciate, its no use. It wasn't just that bit from **The Jazz Review**. There've been other things. Like, I bought an Ornette Coleman record, and then spent \$429.02 on repairs for my hi-fi rig before I discovered that he **plays** that way, for God's sake.

I admit I wavered in my resolution to give up jazz after making the decision in my pad that night. I felt nostalgia, thought maybe I should make one more try. A few more years at Juilliard, with post-graduate work at Eastman or someplace, might put me back on the scene. But then I had a sobering experience.

I had to go see the IBM people on some business, and one of the executives took me into their show-room to let me have a look at one of their fabulous thinking machines. It happened that I had left my glasses in my other suit, so I wasn't seeing too well that day. Just the same, I swear it happened. There was this thinking machine squatting in the show-room, the best one they had, with an instrument case at its feet, reading **The Jazz Review**. As I came up to it, the darn thing looked up at me and said:

"Say, man, I don't dig this paragraph here. It says The implications from paragraph (3) run . . ."

## INTRODUCING THE JAZZTET

### An interview with Art Farmer

I've known Benny Golson since 1953, when he joined Hamp's band for a few weeks. I've always liked his writing, and he did the arrangements for my **Brass Shout** date. Then, last year, Benny and Curtis Fuller had been working together. They had some arrangements for the two of them, but after they'd worked a while, they decided they would like a third voice, a trumpet, and they thought of me. I was in California then, after a tour of Europe with Gerry Mulligan last spring, waiting to start work on a movie with Gerry, and they were working at the Jazz Workshop in San Francisco when Benny first called me about the sextet idea. As it turned out, the movie took a long time to get started, and the sextet idea really developed in the meantime.

I had a pretty quiet summer. I went to Mexico for a while, and then I recorded the **Aztec Suite** for U-A, but I didn't have any definite plans after that. Gerry had disbanded the quartet, and he was talking about a big band, but I wasn't too enthusiastic about playing in a big band again. I was almost set on doing a more personal kind of thing—playing solo with just a rhythm section. That's a real challenge, because you can't just call in the tenor player when you run out of ideas. But I was still thinking about the Jazztet idea.

By the time Benny called me the second time, I'd come to feel that the idea of a sextet came closer to what I wanted to do musically than anything else I could think of. There's a lot of versatility in a sextet with three horns;

you can have any one horn playing in front of the rhythm section, or any combination of the three horns, and that gives the ensemble a lot of possibilities for change and variety. And of course, with Benny writing for the group, we'd certainly be able to explore some of the ensemble possibilities of the instrumentation. My interest in working with a sextet comes pretty naturally from my past experience. I've worked with all kinds of groups, and I know the group affects the way I play and the feeling I get playing. When I recorded **Aztec Suite** with a big band behind me, it felt completely different from playing in a big band. Playing inside a big band is like being in prison, but in front of that big band I felt there was room to expand. There's something psychological about small groups that doesn't induce you to let out as a rule. And I'm always looking for contrasts in volume in playing. When I was working with Gerry, playing with just brass and drums, the trumpet would stick out if I played too loud. With the big band, I could scream as loud as I wanted. When I was with Horace, I had to play louder than I did with Gerry, but we didn't have as much contrast in volume as in Gerry's group. It seems to me this sextet with Benny and Curtis gives both the possibility of contrast in volume and that feeling of support.

So we got together and decided to do it. We decided early in our talks that we wanted a real piano player in the group, for whom we would write out a real part to go along with the horns, instead of just a member of the rhythm section; he could give us that much more versatility. We had decided to ask several piano players we all liked, Bill Evans, Tommy Flanagan and Ray Bryant, but as it worked out, all three had other plans. So then Benny and Curtis suggested McCoy Tyner, a young Philadelphian who'd worked with them earlier, and after I heard him play, I agreed that he was perfect for the job.





Jerrold Schatzberg

**The Jazztet invoking the Muse.** Addison Farmer/ Lex Humphries/ Curtis Fuller/ McCoy Tyner.  
Benny Golson Art Farmer

My brother Addison was a natural choice on bass, and drummer Lex Humphries, who's worked with Dizzy Gillespie, has fitted in very well.

Of course, we're still working on the foundation with the Jazztet, but it's already an organized group and a serious one from the point of view of music. And we haven't had any disagreements musically in taste, aims or policy.

Of course, we're more concerned with ensemble playing than most modern groups have been. When I talk about working on the foundation, I mean we are trying to establish a musical basis we can work out from and go back to, not necessarily anything conservative, but a basic groove. Things like Benny's **Whisper Not**, that's our basic groove. And we're working on really playing together for a musical blend.

Some listeners comment that we sound like a big band at times, but that's not what we're after. We want to sound like a sextet, just what we are. Maybe they say that because people have gotten used to small groups playing unison ensembles. But when you have three horns, unison gets pretty boring—it just doesn't take advantage of the possibilities. With a harmonic approach we can get a lot more variety. Of course, I have the lead most of the time, Curtis does most of the counterlines, and Benny is mostly in the lower register in ensemble, but we can still get a lot of variety in ensemble sound by the use of color—I'll use a Harmon mute, or we'll use hats; there are a lot of possibilities. In fact there are so many that we aren't even thinking about a contrapuntal approach for the time being. There are a lot of ensemble ideas that aren't used in modern jazz. We want to work with various combinations of instruments within the group, do some things without the rhythm section, do some pieces without solos—sketches. We also want to do some pieces by other writers beside Benny, George Russell for one.

That's one kind of thing that decided me on this group—there are some things that you can only do with an organized group. For example, George Russell has always suffered on records from under-rehearsal. He's always had to get the best guys in town, and on one record, that Brandeis Concert on Columbia, we rehearsed once a week for months before recording, but even that record could still have been better. That's the whole trouble with making records today. If I'm going to make a record with four or five horns, I'll call an arranger and work with him on the arrangements. Then I'll have to call the best guys in town, and I'll thank God they're there, that they're open the day of the session. It takes the best guys in town to play the arrangements down. And if it's anything the least bit

subtle, we're lucky to get ten percent of it down on the record, because to play a thing right, you must get into it, go to the heart of it.

I'd like to see more reflection than you get in making recordings today. As it is, nine times out of ten it doesn't come out right. What we need is to play a tune on the job for a few months, like we did when I was with Horace's group, before we record. Now, people will go into a studio and play something, and they don't know why they're playing it. Horace used to write out the line, the changes and the interludes, and we'd play it down a few times. We never rehearsed except on new tunes, and then only one time. But we'd work things out on the job, using the music the first two or three nights, but we'd have played a tune on jobs for several months by the time we recorded it. That's one kind of thing we hope to do with the Jazztet—to work on something until we get into it.

We were happy that we had eight weeks between the Five Spot and the Jazz Gallery, because that gave us lots of time to work into our book. We've travelled quite a bit since then, and when we were in Chicago recently, we cut our first record for Argo. We recorded five standards and five originals, including Benny's **Killer Joe**, **I Remember Clifford** and a new ballad called **Park Avenue Petite**, and my tune **Mox Nix**.

But everyone in the group is still developing. And all of us agree that we have to satisfy our own needs as musicians. We have to satisfy the public too, but our own needs come first. We'd like to play anywhere we can get the public to really listen, but we don't ever want to feel that we have to lighten up on what we are doing. We believe that what we are doing has musical merit, that it's right for us, and we think that we can reach a sizeable audience by doing just what we want to do.

# RECORD REVIEWS

## JOHN COLTRANE: "Giant Steps". Atlantic 1311.

Coltrane, tenor; Tommy Flanagan, piano; Paul Chambers, bass; Arthur Taylor, drums. *Giant Steps*; *Cousin Mary*; *Countdown*; *Spiral*; *Syeeda's Song* Flute; Mr. P. C. Wynton Kelly and Jimmy Cobb replace Flanagan and Taylor on *Naima*.

I have never heard Coltrane play so well, and think for the first time that all that roaring of praise (which has seemed somewhat indiscriminate in the past) is becoming fully justified. Everyone, even those who have had reservations about Coltrane, should hear this set.

Having declared this so enthusiastically, I should make my own former reservations explicit. Until now, Coltrane has never seemed to me to be a really complete musician. Granted, he has been playing those lines of striking originality and harmonic richness, but concentration on these virtues apparently cost him others. His time has had a certain stiffness, his use of timbre has been curiously unvarying and clumsy, and (this one is pretty subjective) he seems to have lacked, in spite of that daring, the ability to construct memorable and unified melodies. Of course, you can legitimately ask what makes one line a beautiful melody and another not. Perhaps in Coltrane's case the trouble was the relentlessness of the stream of scales, all those notes with so little variety of time value and no relieving rests, no punctuating silences. And I feel these are vital elements of melody.

Energy and harmonic sophistication may be important, but they are not sufficient.

Then there is the question of his tone. There is no point in getting sidetracked in a discussion about whether or not his tone is a "good" one (it seems to me that any kind of tone can be appropriate in certain context); the point is that Coltrane's use of tone has been remarkably limited. Any real range of expressive shading is, or was, foreign to it. This is an important restrictive handicap, whether voluntarily assumed or not, particularly to a saxophonist. I'm not objecting to any single kind of tone as measurable in reed-mouthpiece combination, vibrato, and type of embouchure; the so-called hard tenor tone can be beautifully variable as, for example, in Sonny Rollins' work. But if it isn't variable, if it is always the same, a potential dimension is lost, and musical scope restricted. A player who can give the same note two or more different kinds of bare sound can do twice as much, express twice as much, as one who can't or doesn't. I guess the most striking example of contemporary tonal virtuosity is Ornette Coleman, whose sound shifts purposefully from phrase to phrase. He builds with his tone and it's this ability more than any other which makes his music as rich as it is, regardless of any unrelated weaknesses he may or may not have. In addition to limiting the expressiveness of his own playing, Coltrane's tonal uniformity has had a deplorable effect on some of the young tenors he has influenced. This can't be held against him, of course; I bring it up because Coltrane has been interesting for me largely in spite of his tonal inflexibility, and if another man assumes that limitation in the hope of sounding like Coltrane, he arbitrarily denies himself the use of a very important expressive technique. He denies himself a certain freedom. Some players, like Cannonball Adderley and Benny Golson, have absorbed many of Coltrane's virtues without feeling that they have to restrict themselves in this peculiar way. And the point in best made, of course, by the fact that Coltrane himself now seems to be extending his tonal resources. This brings me to his playing on this album. As I said, all my past gripes are evaporating. I don't mean to suggest that this is a "new" Coltrane, far from it. The differences are not great, but I do think they are of the utmost importance. (They may strike me particularly because I don't have the opportunity to hear him live, and haven't been able to follow his development month by month, or week by week.) The old explorations have not been diluted, just enriched, and the enrichment has been both

melodic and tonal. Melodically, he seems to be breaking up his lines more than formerly, and balancing one against another for a more cohesive overall structure. There is still that incessant flow of notes, but fewer vacant scales and more fascinating turns. And there is an increased variety in the length of his lines, more short, pithy statements to balance the long convoluted ones. Finally, there is a wonderful, and growing, sense of cadence, of inevitable resolution. His tone, of course, is fundamentally unchanged, although I do hear a general softening, and a new use of terminal vibrato on some of those sustained notes which used to be about as expressive as an old automobile horn. But I'm jumping with joy to hear his tone extending in *scope*. There are passages here where he sounds tender, even wistful, and not only on the ballad *Naima*. He floats notes out where at one time he would have had to, or chosen to, push them out. Listen to his beautiful use of timbre on the theme of *Spiral*, the new touches of gentleness on the theme of the up-tempo *Giant Steps*, and the subtle shifts in sound between harshness and poignancy on *Cousin Mary*.

The rhythm section is close to perfect throughout. I can't overstate Tommy Flanagan's importance to the success of the session; with the possible exception of Bill Evans, he is my favorite of all the pianists I might have expected Coltrane to use. He doesn't have Evan's harmonic daring and unpredictability, but he has a consistency and absolute relaxation Evans hasn't yet fully attained. His comping is excellent, simultaneously rich and unobtrusive, and, although he could hardly sound less like Monk, he has a similar ability to slide in softly (that is, softly in Flanagan's case) surprising supporting chords. His solo work has a kind of lovely surface polish; the result, I guess, of a very subtle sense of time and a pearly touch few other pianists can match. His dynamic range is fairly restricted—that is, he chooses to never play loud or hard—but within that range he makes the most perfectly delicate discriminations of accent and volume. Although some of his lines are long, there is never a trace of rambling or misdirection; each is a unit, ending where it should with optimum effect. And he never, never has any use for the current fad of voicing like Red Garland or Ahmad Jamal. The playing of Paul Chambers and Art Taylor is by now so familiar that comment isn't necessary, other than to note that they are at their best here. All the tunes are originals by Coltrane, and he proves to be such a fine composer that I see no earthly



reason why the Miles Davis book wasn't full of his things. My favorite tracks are *Giant Steps*, which is up-tempo and has a lovely Flanagan solo, *Cousin Mary*, which is a swinging almost-blues, rich and earthy, but with none of the grotesque exaggerations of some modern funk and *Spiral*, a relatively gentle piece with recurring descending cadences. Flanagan's work on *Syeeda's Song Flute* is not his best, and *Mr. P. C.*, though fine, lacks the original concepts of the others. *Countdown* is a short tour de force at a blazing tempo. The only slow piece is *Naima*, on which Wynton Kelly, who replaces Flanagan for this track only, has the solo space. His playing there is misty and romantic, like some of Bill Evans's ballad work, and not entirely to my taste. Any Coltrane album would be important if only because he has recently become such a pervasive influence. This one is important for the more substantial reason that it is very beautiful.

Mait Edey

**LA VERN BAKER: "Precious Memories". Atlantic 8036.**

*Precious Memories*; Carrying the Cross for My Boss; Just a Closer Walk with Thee; Touch Me, Lord Jesus; Didn't It Rain; Precious Lord; Somebody Touched Me; In the Upper Room; Journey to the Sky; Everytime I Feel the Spirit; Too Close; Without a God. LaVern Baker, vocals, accompanied by Prof. Alex Bradford and his Singers and an orchestra conducted by Reggie Obrecht.

Great critics get right to the heart of their subjects; the rest of us fight with the liner notes. Especially the kind that let us know that this lp is "the one thing I have wanted to do all my life" (LaVern Baker). All it takes is a remark like that and a few hints about the singer's exceptional voice, dedicated understanding mind, extensive vocal range, sumptuous tone, intense emotional force, driving rhythmic vitality, flair for the dramatic, technique and strict religious upbringing—and in reference to a singer who is, as far as I know, a R & R tinged pop vocalist—to make me suspect that the project is one great big camp. I would be certain except that, of all the numbers, I liked best *Touch Me Lord Jesus*, the one in which they lay it on with a shovel, and *Didn't It Rain*, which should be the easiest thing in the world to fake, doesn't come off at all. LaVern Baker lets you know she's singing gospel, and not Bessie Smith or Blues Ballads, by her phrasing (*Touch . . . touch me, Lord Jesus/With . . . thy hand of mercy*), the swoops, climactic growls and the final gliding ritardandi. And if there's any lingering

doubt, Atlantic supplied her with Prof. Alex Bradford and his Singers, who are much less fun to listen to than to watch. (Their turn at the 1959 . . . Folk Festival was saved from disaster by their movement, which disarmed criticism, just as Chuck Berry's movement made his act at the 1958 . . . Jazz Festival). But for all her straining, LaVern doesn't achieve on *In the Upper Room* the powerful sincerity Mahalia projected in her 1951 version (Apollo), nor does her voice on *Precious Memories* have anything like the vibrancy or the fabulous control Georgia Peach shows on her version (Classic Editions). LaVern's level is more that of the Drinkards, and her *Somebody Touched Me* compares favorably with theirs. Both performances generate plenty of heat, if little light, but after all, that is what modern gospel is all about. All this is fairly obvious and entirely to be expected. What I wish I could explain better is why I liked the hammy *Just a Closer Walk with Thee* (the beautiful melody aside) almost as much as the even hammier *Touch Me, Lord Jesus*.

Atlantic has furnished the album cover with a sort of *trompe l'oeil* with water photograph of the Holy Bible (I. P. Hereford's copy), a bookmark ('With the—picture of a harp—praise the Lord'), lace, and lilies-of-the-valley—not taking any chances. But they fail to list the composers of the songs, either on the liner or the record label.

J. S. Shipman

**BILL EVANS: "New Jazz Conceptions". Riverside RLP 12-223.**

Bill Evans, piano. *I Got It Bad and That Ain't Good*; Waltz for Debby; *My Romance*. Evans, piano; Teddy Kotick, bass; Paul Motian, drums. *I love you*; Five; *Conception*; *Easy Living*; *Displacement*; *Speak Low*; *Our Delight*; No Cover, No Minimum.

**"Everybody Digs BILL EVANS".**

Riverside RLP 12-291.

Bill Evans, piano. *Lucky to be Me*; *Peace Piece*; *Epilogue*. Evans, piano; Sam Jones, bass; Philly Joe Jones, drums. *Minority*; *Young and Foolish*; *Night and Day*; *Tenderly*; *What is there To Say*; *Oleo*.

Both in the liner notes of RLP 12-291 and in Nat Hentoff's piece on Evans in the October *Jazz Review* quite a point is made of the fact that twenty-seven months separate the making of the two above discs, and that the interval was due to the pianist's own wishes. If one becomes acquainted with both of these records at once, as I did, there appears to be little to choose between them initially. Yet as familiarity grows the differences become very clear, and one

ends by respecting Evans considerably, both for having the confidence and independence to wait, and for progressing so much in that period. The first is a quite promising debut, showing Evans to be a highly competent craftsman with an extensive and reliable command of his instrument and a good harmonic sense. Originality is not, however, much in evidence. Tracks like *I Love You* demonstrate his technique and his ability to construct linear improvisations efficiently out of chord sequences. *Speak Low* gives a good idea of his approach to keyboard texture, even if it is hardly a sympathetic treatment of the piece. In neither case is there any real melodic freshness. The two best performances, perhaps not surprisingly, are based on the two best compositions. Evans's virtuoso treatment of Shearing's *Conception* is still conventional but, even in the out-of-tempo introduction, has a boldness of execution that the later lp shows to be important in the projection of his rhythmic ideas. Dameron's *Our Delight* is the best of all and hints at later developments in the use of dynamics in the theme chorus and in the construction and continuity of phrases in the improvisation.

The above performances show Evans as a craftsman thinking primarily in terms of his instrument (listen to the coda of *I Love You*); when the second lp was made he had become a creative improviser whose work, while it represents a most sensitive utilisation of some of the instrument's resources, is conceived primarily in musical, not pianistic, terms. *Minority* and *Night and Day* are probably the outstanding achievements here. The presentation and later restatement of the *Night and Day* theme are strikingly original, showing it in a new light on melodic, rhythmic and harmonic planes, and the improvisation is a true development of the theme. Philly Joe Jones drums superbly throughout the lp but nowhere more so than here. *Minority* shows that Evans has an uncommon power of varied but always disciplined melodic invention at fast tempo. *Tenderly* illustrates not only the variety of melodic construction but also the ability to build a series of tellingly diversified phrases towards a climax. His originality is not only manifest in the actual invention of musical material but in the surprisingly personal keyboard voicings he has developed in slow performance—note the clarity and richness of *Tenderly*. While he has profited from the freedom of accentuation bop brought to the jazz language, Evans has developed some rather individual rhythmic devices, the use of delayed accents being especially sensitive. The expression of melodic and harmonic qualities is aided by an unusually

personal touch; Evans obtains a sound from the piano that is as characteristic as the music he plays, a sound that is, in fact, an integral part of that music.

It is scarcely a criticism to say that the other performances do not come up to the level of those three. **Peace Piece** is an arresting, fragmentary improvisation over an ostinato bass and recalls Chopin's **Berceuse**. Listening to this one understands Miles Davis's remark (in *The Jazz Review*, December, 1958) that when Evans plays a chord he plays a sound rather than a chord. There are elements here, and in **Epilogue**, of a more original harmonic style than Evans has elsewhere attained, but a more positively formed melodic development would have been desirable.

Max Harrison

**ART FARMER: "Brass Shout". United Artists UAL 4047.**

Art Farmer, Lee Morgan, Ernie Royal, trumpets; Curtis Fuller, Jimmy Cleveland, trombones. James Haughton, baritone horn; Julius Watkins, french horn; Don Butterfield, tuba; Percy Heath, bass; Philly Joe Jones, drums. Wayne Andre replaces Cleveland on April in Paris, Haughton on Nica's Dream, Autumn Leaves and Stella by Starlight; Bob Northern replaces Watkins on April in Paris; Elvin Jones replaces Philly Joe Jones on Nica's Dream, Autumn Leaves and Stella by Starlight. Nica's Dream; Autumn Leaves; Moanin'; April in Paris; Five Spot After Dark; Stella by Starlight; Minor Vamp. All arrangements by Benny Golson.

For some time, Benny Golson has been one of the more exciting active arranger-composers. His Jazztet collaboration with Art Farmer and Curtis Fuller has been interesting because of his charts. While his playing is a trifle derivative, it has been more than adequate to place him in the second echelon of jazz performers. It comes as a distinct disappointment, then, to find this record so lacking in any evidence of his very real talent. Practically all of the charts give the impression of hurried, deadline writing (which may well be the case) devoid of the fine concern for detail that has been evident in Golson's other work. Art Farmer, nominally the leader, plays consistently well throughout the album, but hardly up to the level of his other recent recording efforts. In *Nica's Dream*, Golson regrettably chooses to incorporate the same Latin rhythmic elements that have always been associated with the line, and the arrangement suffers from a poor performance. **Minor Vamp** is similar and, although Golson's heavy sound combinations are a trifle more effective, the use of muted trumpets over open trombones is disconcertingly like a fuzzy voicing used by Les Brown's arrangers a few years ago. **Moanin'**

has by now practically become a jazz standard. The orchestrated 'comping' is not so successful as Gil Evans' use of this device, perhaps because Golson uses a tuba in the root of his chords, spaced far enough away from the other voices to exert a ponderous retardation upon the rhythm. Bobby Timmons (whom no one bothered to list in the personnel) plays a good piano solo in the conventionally popular 'churchy' style.

**April in Paris** opens like the reprise in a Broadway musical. Golson again seems concerned with harmony for its own sake and derives a variation in tone color only by the use of such relatively common devices as a french horn obligato and tuba counterpoint. The harmonic changes fall evenly on the beat, their clock-like regularity making it extremely difficult to sustain any kind of emotional reaction to the music. The same is true of **Stella by Starlight**, which is treated similarly.

In some cases the obligatos that Golson uses are more detraction than addition to the success of the arrangements.

**Five Spot After Dark** was the theme used by the Jazztet at the Five Spot; this version seems to be an expansion of a small group chart. Curtis Fuller's solo is technically competent but is almost embarrassingly derivative of J. J. Johnson. In **Autumn Leaves** the preponderance of sounds in the lower range is massive enough to detract from the establishment of any rhythmic continuity. Julius Watkins' solo here, as throughout the record, is notable only because of the mechanical difficulties involved in playing jazz on the french horn. Although he plays at times with driving rhythm, Watkins' subject matter is for the most part unoriginal.

A few words should be added about the liner notes, which are among the worst I have ever seen. Some examples: "It seems fitting that [Golson] should lend his mellow, sometimes searing, comfortably traditional yet dramatically modern, but always exciting stylings to these arrangements". And such adjectival excesses as "thick, meaty textures" "coiled strength", all of which are somehow referred to as "Golson trademarks". When I read of Don Butterfield's "loosely muscled bottom sound", I begin to wonder if this recording is intended for the home.

Don Heckman

**CURTIS FULLER: "Sliding Easy". United Artists UAL 4041.**

Lee Morgan, trumpet; Hank Mobley, tenor; Curtis Fuller, trombone; Tommy Flanagan, piano; Paul Chambers, bass; Elvin Jones, drums.

**Bit Of Heaven**; **Down Home**; **I Wonder Where Our Love Has Gone**; **Bongo Bop**; **When Lights Are Low**; **C.T.A.**

Instead of letting these young veterans of countless blowing sessions have yet another fling, United Artists got Gigi Gryce and Benny Golson to provide arrangements—Gryce doing **Down Home** and **C.T.A.**, and Golson the rest. One knows by now what to expect from Golson: lush, minor-key, romantic themes encased in brooding, pastel-tinged scores. Since he wrote none of the melodies himself he has had to do some adapting, and it is significant that his most successful arrangement is on Fuller's **Bit Of Heaven**, a theme patently inspired by Benny's own work. He has written a typical, attractive counter-melody and uses what he terms "piano-type 'comp' passages" for the accompanying horns with skill; elsewhere this device gets in the way. **Lights**, which again has Miles' and not Benny Carter's middle-eight, has a characteristic but most incongruous waltz introduction, as if Golson realised that the tune was so different from anything he had composed that he had to put his stamp on it somehow. Gryce is a more versatile, less idiosyncratic arranger, and his writing emphasizes the gospel-funk of Fuller's **Down Home**, and the ebullience of Jimmy Heath's **C.T.A.**

Of the soloists, Mobley is near his best on **Lights** and **Heaven**, the outstanding track all told, but dire elsewhere. He misses his entry on **Bongo Bop** (incredibly written 'Pop' on label and sleeve), and is quite at sea on **Down**, showing again that this type of funk is foreign to him. On **Heaven**, though, everything comes off, and one can savor the melancholy beauty of his tone without the stumbling and the faulty time that often plagues him. Curtis Fuller has an impressive technique, an individual approach and some ideas, but his deep sound is too monochromatic for the plodding, J. J. influenced, style he seems to be making his own. He lacks Johnson's ability to vary his phrases, lacks his range and also his clean articulation. As a result his ballad feature, **Wonder**, is dull, while his best solos are actually those on **Heaven** and **Lights**, where he closely copies J. J., and on **Bop** where he moves from J. J. to Jimmy Cleveland.

Lee Morgan is the real star of the record. His **Bop** solo is well constructed and played with tremendous verve, building from an astonishingly-conceived staccato chorus to a shout, and back again. He is full of ideas and willing to take chances; his range is expanding all the time, and he is one follower of Clifford Brown who has begun to assimilate Brownie's lyricism—as on **Bit Of Heaven**. As one would expect from his **Moanin'** solo with the Messengers he romps through **Down** with abundant zest. The rhythm section is a credit to

Detroit. Flanagan has several neat, melodic solos, and it seems harsh to criticise him for not having a stronger musical personality when he plays so unpretentiously with such imagination. Elvin Jones is clearly becoming a remarkable drummer. Not quite as 'advanced' as on some other lps, his backing is always sympathetic to the soloist's line and he has two stimulating choruses on **Bop** on which he shifts the rhythm about most ingeniously. The overall tautness of his sound appears vital to his expression, though I hope that every other drummer doesn't copy it. Chambers does everything well, including his inevitable bowed solo, an art which he is improving steadily. A far from momentous record but one worth hearing, particularly for **Bit Of Heaven** and **Lee Morgan**.

Ronald Atkins

**"The BILLIE HOLIDAY Story". Decca DXB 161.**

**Them There Eyes; Lover Man; Easy Living; Baby Get Lost; You're My Thrill; No Greater Love; That Ole Devil Called Love; I'll Look Around; Gimme a Pigfoot; My Man; Don't Explain; Ain't Nobody's Business; Deep Song; Crazy He Calls Me; Keeps On Rainin'; No More; Do Your Duty; Now Or Never; Good Morning Heartache; Somebody's On My Mind; Porgy; Solitude; This Is Heaven To Me; God Bless The Child.**

To those of us who knew and loved Billy Holiday only through her recordings, the story of her troubled life and heartbreaking death seems much less real than her recorded self; when her singing fills our ears and touches our hearts, how can we think of her as anything but a living, feeling, beautiful woman? Billie's musical ear, her rhythm and phrasing, her instinct for form were excellent, but even with less musical sense she would have touched us deeply. Songs that strongly expressed her feelings moved her to inspired projection of those feelings. Her sadness, her joy, her hope and despair we recognize instantly as the genuine human article, and to whatever extent we have experienced those emotions ourselves we understand her. We have heard all the songs in this collection before on Decca releases. Billie's performances range from good to fantastically good, the general pattern being, the better the material the better the singing. Most of the pertinent information about the music is listed, either on the label or on an enclosed roster of personnels. The cuttings were made between Oct. 1944 and March 1950 and include several types of accompaniment. The earliest (**Lover Man, No More**) were made with Camarata, who provided pleasantly innocuous writing for a hotel-type dance band with six strings,

a trumpet, four saxes and four rhythm. This pattern was kept for **That Old Devil Called Love** (Nov. '44) and **Don't Explain** (Aug. '45). By 1946 (**Good Morning Heartache**) both the writing and the violinists had improved considerably, and Billie continued to sing like the great artist she was. In April, 1946, Billy Kyle's small group backed her on **I'll Look Around**, with Kenny Clarke and trumpeter Joe Guy helping recapture the relaxed atmosphere of her early Columbia sides. In 1947 Bob Haggart organized four saxes, four rhythm and Billy Butterfield on some decent, cleanly played arrangements, **Easy Living, Deep Song, No Greater Love, and Solitude**. Two of my favorite sides, **My Man** and **Porgy** were cut in Dec. 1948 with Bobby Tucker, John Levy and Denzil Best. Tucker, also the pianist on the Haggart sides, is extremely sensitive to Billie's most delicate shadings. **Baby Get Lost, Ain't Nobody's Business, Them There Eyes, Keeps On Rainin', Gimme A Pigfoot, Do Your Duty and Now Or Never** were made with a big band led by Sy Oliver in 1949. I assume the arrangements are his. They are characterized by the heavy, parallel seventh-flat fifth voicings used on the Gillespie band in those days, and by 1938 swing band figures. The intimate nature of Billie's voice evidently caused the band to try to soft pedal the heavy shout figures. The trumpets sound strained, the tempos seem too slow for the arrangements, and consequently the band sounds at odds with Billie. The pained, clumsy ensembles lead me to suspect that the band was uncomfortable with what they were given to play. At any rate these seven sides are the weakest in the collection. The songs themselves are not particularly inspiring, the arrangements work against the mood of the singer, the band is poorly rehearsed and seems divided in its interpretation of the arrangements. In spite of all this, Billie sings well. The three sides cut in Oct. 1949, **Somebody's On My Mind, Crazy He Calls Me** and **You're My Thrill**, are tidy little charts for strings, saxes and Bobby Hackett. Despite the tendency of the bass player to clump along, the framework is sympathetic to Billie, and she sings beautifully. On the last date, **This Is Heaven and God Bless The Child**, there is in addition to the saxes and strings a vocal group which goes "Oooo" very nicely, but makes all the lyrics assigned it sound like a Marx Brothers satire on a ladies' aid production of **HMS Pinafore**. Though their sanctimonious intoning of phrases like "this is heaven" and "god bless the child" is humorless and irritating, Billie steps out and lays her message right on us, bless her. The two records are packaged in a double jacket, sprinkled inside with

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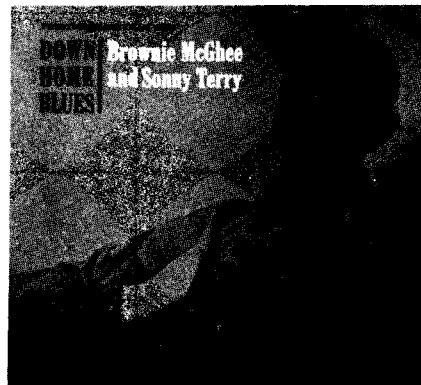
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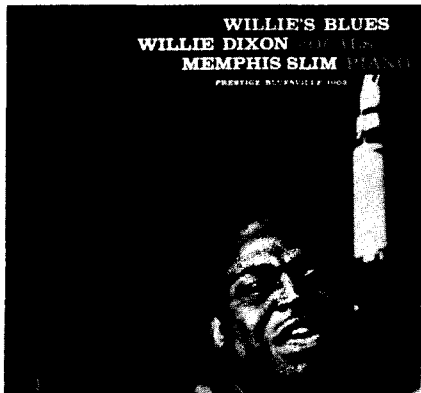
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candid shots of Billie, an eulogy by William Dufty, and short pertinent excerpts from Billie's autobiography beneath the title of each song. The cover portrait, a low key profile showing an incredibly soft expression of eye and mouth, is one of the loveliest I have seen.

Bill Crow

**John Lee Hooker: "House Of The Blues". Chess lp 1413.**

John Lee Hooker performs two kinds of material, in two rather different ways. When singing slow blues Hooker uses a variety of intonations and sings with a seriousness that is unequalled among contemporary blues singers. His guitar playing is simple, but he uses certain devices that are characteristically his own, such as a fourth with a conventional seventh chord, and vibrating the strings to get an echo effect. On faster tunes there is the big city jive approach that so many other rock and roll singers have popularized. Here the best is the thing and the quality of the words and music are subordinated to it. But even in the faster tunes, Hooker can startle you with a phrase rich in feeling.

This recording is a good sampling of Hooker's work, and it has a few really notable performances. The words to **Down At The Landing** are particularly nice; and notice how Hooker, always his own man, brings in a modern touch when he says "my baby, she might have got hung up, people." Somehow this expression does not seem out of place alongside the other, more traditional lyrics. **The Groundhog Blues** is about the traditional back door stranger who is after the singer's woman. It is sung with a very low intonation which actually suggests the rooting of a groundhog which the words describe. **Rambling By Myself** builds a mood of searing intensity virtually by the power of presentation alone. The words are rather ordinary, but the whole is so deeply felt that the images are communicated beautifully. **High Priced Woman, Women and Money, Walkin The Boogie, It's My Fault, and Leave My Wife Alone** are fast, strong beat songs, good for dancing, but mostly without any qualities of special interest. In **Walkin' The Boogie** there is a strange figure on the electric guitar which sounds almost like a mandolin and is eerily effective.

Several devices which recur in Hooker's work are worth noting. One is the spoken phrase that is accompanied by the guitar. This device is not unique with Hooker, but is used especially well by him. In the dramatic **Union Station Blues** Hooker says while playing a fine guitar part, "Lord you know how I feel—my baby gone down the line—She left this morning." All

the while the guitar is playing out the feeling, and a powerful mood is built. Another device Hooker features is to present a series of rhymed verses, and then, as though talking, to sing another verse that does not rhyme. On **High Priced Woman** for example: "I got a map of the highway/ Move it down the line/ You're a high priced chick/ And I got to let you go." Hooker must have the loudest foot tap of any singer in history, and it is always audible on his recordings. It serves almost as a drum support, and after awhile one stops noticing it. Lastly I should point out that Hooker is actually able to use that monster, the electric guitar, for his own purposes, rather than having it control him. The vibrating strings, powerful bass lines and unison string runs are all more effective than they would be on an acoustic guitar. Only on an occasional boogie number does one wish that the amplifier were turned 'way down.

If you like to listen to blues, get this record.

Dick Weissman

**"The Folk-blues of JOHN LEE HOOKER." Riverside RLP 12-838.**

To quote from the sleeve notes:

"Actually, this album stems from the fact that Riverside's Bill Grauer has long been a Hooker fan. When the opportunity to record John Lee presented itself, there was initially some thought of having him do a group of tunes associated with Leadbelly." Fortunately "it turned out that Hooker didn't know Leadbelly's songs as such . . ." for which we can be grateful. As it is, it seems that the dead hand of the idea man has weighed heavily on Hooker. On the front cover this lp is "**The Country Blues**"; on the liner it is entitled "**The Folk-Blues**". Country Folk-Blues at all costs, and neither Hooker nor the listener is permitted to forget it. For the past dozen years Hooker has lived in Detroit and for the previous ten years he had been a factory worker in Memphis and Cincinnati. His Detroit bands have been tough, jumping, wild groups with tenor saxes, electric guitars, electric basses, electric harmonicas, even vibes and organ at one time or another. And Hooker himself of course, plays electric guitar, not because of commercial pressures but because he likes it. Many of his recordings have been solo though often he has rhythm accompaniment, harp, or supplementary guitar to support him. Here he plays acoustic guitar and he is alone. Somehow he never seems to get off the ground; his rhythms are labored, or simply strummed, his melodic fill-ins are hammered-on but they do not produce the whining, talking notes that he gets out of his

electric guitar.

A very personal singer, Hooker seldom echoes the work of others, and on this disc he is most effective when he is himself: on the jumping **Wobblin' Baby** or the moody **Behind the Plow**. But most of the record is comprised of echoes, of Leroy Carr on **How Long Blues** or I'm **Prison Bound**; of Bessie Smith on **I Rowed a Little Boat**, of Memphis Minnie on **Good Mornin' Little School Girl**, of Josh White on **She's Long, She's Tall, She Weeps Like a Willow Tree**, of Victoria Spivey on **Black Snake**, of Lemon Jefferson on **Church Bell Tone**, of Thommy McClennan on **Bundle Up and Go**, of Will Shade on **Pea Vine Special**. If he hasn't played the records one feels that Hooker was asked to "sing the old-time country folk-blues you used to hear, John." Somehow, in spite of the fine, warm, rich voice and the deep throbbing notes of the guitar it doesn't really come over as Hooker unadulterated.

And now, because John Lee Hooker is John Lee Hooker let me say that there are some fine things on this lp and **Black Snake** is great by any standards.

Paul Oliver

**QUINCY JONES: "The Birth of a Band". Mercury MG 20444.**

Phil Woods, Frank Wess, Benny Golson, Zoot Sims, Sahib Shihab, saxes; Jimmy Cleveland, Urbie Green, Melba Liston, Quentin Jackson, trombones; Quincy Jones, Clark Terry, Ernie Royal, Joe Newman, trumpets; Milton Hinton, bass; Sam Woodyard, drums; Patricia Anne Bowen, piano.

**The Birth of a Band; Moanin'; I Remember Clifford; Along Came Betty; Tickletoe; Happy Faces; Whisper Not; The Gypsy; A Change of Pace; Tuxedo Junction.**

After years of standing by while other leaders eagerly employed his talents, Quincy Jones has got a band of his own. And it's a pretty good one, too. This group is not exactly the one that eventually went to Europe (the liner notes do not give an accurate listing of the different sessions that made up this recording), but the spirit of Jones' work remains intact. His place is secure in that select circle of composer-arrangers who can make studio bands sound as though they are not studio bands. The music is described as a cross-section of the type the band will play while on tour and is aimed at a danceable style. For once this isn't a limitation. Jones has never been much of an innovator, but the enthusiasm and exuberance that he brings to his music are far more important qualifications for success as a dance band leader. Bobby Timmon's **Moanin'** adapts surprisingly well to a dance groove (for all the pseudo-hipsterisms in the ghosted liner notes attributed to

Count Basie, they give no indication of any composer credits). The style of the arrangement, as in **Doodlin'**, has become pretty well standardized by the tune's popularity, but the band plays cleanly and in tune. Not so with **Happy Faces**, one of those ubiquitous Basie-type blues. The difficult ensemble writing in the center sections results in the record's least satisfactory performance, despite a fine tenor solo by Zoot Sims.

**The Birth of a Band** makes a good opener (but oh, those damned PR man titles), with Zoot and Jerome Richardson swinging freely through an express train tempo. Melba Liston's chart of **The Gypsy** is a richly textured accompaniment to Phil Woods alto solo. The soft sensuality of the harmonization does not prevent Woods from playing with the brittle extroversion that characterizes his style. The contrast is effective.

**I Remember Clifford**, the other ballad on the set, is a lovely example of the beauty that a sensitive soloist can evoke when he is given the proper setting. Nat Pierce's arrangement is well written, but hardly comes up to the level of Clark Terry's solo. **Whisper Not** and **Along Came Betty** bear the stamp of Jones' personality. Long interweaving contrapuntal lines leading into unison trumpet and tenor playing dotted eighth-note figures characterize Benny Golson's **Whisper**. Zoot once again blows exceptionally well, demonstrating his talent for well organized solos which are not cramped by the episodic nature of big band jazz. **Betty** has an interesting second chorus employing humorously effective doo-wah brass. Woods' solo is a trifle too much for the arrangement. Al Cohn's charts have, for some peculiar reason, always typified New York big band jazz for me, and **Tickle Toe** is no exception. He somehow manages to evoke the essence of the old 52nd St., Charlie's Tavern and the exchange floor. The primary difference between Jones' musical perception and that of most other dance band leaders is that Quincy starts with the proposition that jazz is danceable rather than that dance music can sound jazzy. The net result is that his exuberant music seems far closer to the heart of youth than the derivative, watered-down styles of most of today's other dance bands. This may well become one of the major factors in his success.

Don Heckman

**JOHN LEWIS: "Improvised Meditations & Excursions". Atlantic 1313.** **Now's the Time**; **Smoke Gets in Your Eyes**; **Delaunay's Dilemma**; **September Song**. John Lewis, piano; George DuVivier, bass; Connie Kay, drums. **Love Me**; **Yesterdays**; **How Long Has This Been Going On?**

Lewis, piano; Percy Heath, bass; Connie Kay, drums.

John Lewis, perhaps more than most composer-performers, has concerned himself with structural development as a primary goal. His compositions for the Modern Jazz Quartet and for motion picture underscoring have adequately demonstrated his competence in doing so. As a performer, his improvisatory conception has generally been subordinated to the organic unity of the work under consideration, and, as a result, the M.J.Q. has characteristically reflected the stamp of his personality. In this new Atlantic recording, we are given an opportunity to hear Lewis in a setting which felicitously displays his individual skills.

One of the real delights of his playing is the emphasis on tone, the result of a more 'classical' touch on his instrument than is used by most of his contemporaries. Variation in touch, attack, pedaling and duration of sound give him a formidable arsenal of tonal subtleties. Three of the numbers are particularly interesting in this respect; **Smoke Gets in Your Eyes**, **Yesterdays** and **September Song** all open in out-of-tempo Tatum style and then fall into nice rocking grooves. **Love Me** exemplifies Lewis' urbane wit. Very few pianists since Teddy Wilson have been able to give us so sophisticated an interpretation. Lewis' explorations in more basic areas are not quite so successful. Charlie Parker's **Now's the Time** suffers from an almost effete underplaying of emotional content. Lewis apparently insists at all times upon the rigid control of his conception and by doing so prevents the work from soaring forth on its own head of steam. It is difficult to be critical with a composer who feels strongly enough about his music to want to keep it in hand at all times, but somehow I have the feeling that this just isn't the blues. **Delaunay's Dilemma**, on the other hand, gets into a nice head-rocking groove. Notice particularly Lewis' use of riff patterns; he will take the most basic sort of rhythmic device and use it to suggest a complex series of variations. In this sense the album is well titled. The skeletal framework stated by Lewis may eventually serve as the basis of future explorations. The least successful number on the set is **How Long Has This Been Going On**. Lewis avoids a direct statement of the melody and plays an elaborate series of variations upon the theme. In this case the fragmentation of riff-like patterns is somewhat annoying, probably because the rhythms usually duplicate the two-beat feeling of the bass. His playing would be more consistently attractive if he would not indulge in such a calculated avoidance of long lines.

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The record is hardly a major item in Lewis' artistic achievements, but it does furnish an interesting insight into the manner in which an important artist develops his concepts.

Don Heckman

**BLUE MITCHELL: "Out of the Blue".** Riverside, RLP 12-293.

**Blue Mitchell**, trumpet; **Benny Golson**, tenor sax; **Wynton Kelly**, piano; **Paul Chambers** or **Sam Jones**, bass; **Art Blakey**, drums.

**Blues on my Mind**; **It Could Happen to You**; **Boomerang**; **Sweet-cakes**; **Missing You**; **When the Saints go Marching in**.

Blue Mitchell, a good trumpet player and soloist, is nominally the leader of this date, but he contributes nothing to this record in the role of leader. It suffers from too little preparation and no unified point of view. Being the leader of a record date these days often means that your name and probably your photograph are on the cover; you are paid more; and maybe you choose the other musicians on the date. When musicians take no more responsibility for their recordings than that, they neglect a good opportunity for expression. There is nothing particularly distinguished about the writing, or the playing of any of the soloists, and without the help of some thread of a unifying idea (even if it were only a good ensemble sound) this record has the lack of character of most "blowing sessions". Benny Golson's playing has been described as a cross between Lucky Thompson and John Coltrane, a heavy cross to bear. He is out of tune in the higher register, and his rough, full sound often burdens him during his fast sixteenth-note passages. Trying to play Coltrane-like runs without his liquid sound and phrasing has a disastrously nervous result. Golson sounds best at his most economical. Wynton Kelly is his very professional self, and Art Blakey is subdued and musical. Sam Jones and Paul Chambers are alternate bassists on this date, and this presents an interesting opportunity for comparison. As a soloist, Jones sounds as comfortable in **Blues on my Mind** as I have ever heard him, and he plays very well. Unfortunately, he suffers from a poor sound. Perhaps it is his bass. He has short, thumpy sounding notes that leave too much space, except in fast tempos. Chambers, on the other hand, seems to attach the tail end of one note to the beginning of the next, giving a wonderful buoyant and smooth quality to his lines. His time seems to fly, leaving lesser bassists back on the ground, sounding rather pedestrian comparison. Chambers has found a very good instrument, with a sustained, singing tone. He takes full advantage of its potentialities while avoiding

the inherent muddiness and lack of definition of such a deep-toned instrument by his strong, clear attack. Jones does his job well. Chambers does his easily, and is always doing much more besides.

I have a composer friend who once earnestly asked me what the bass player and drummer contributed to the music of a small jazz group besides keeping time, which he felt shouldn't be necessary. I explained that this time-keeping function was very important in jazz, because it served as a reference by which the soloist's rhythmic liberties were more acutely set off. What's more, in the work of the best rhythm sections a lot more goes on than mere time-keeping. I would certainly have had a good example in **When the Saints Go Marching In** here. The rhythm section makes a real contribution, from the subtly played head in two-beat and Chambers' syncopated accents in the second chorus, right through to the end of the piano solo. Kelly accompanies superbly, increasing the density of his playing and pushing the section as Golson enters, and the mood gets more exciting. Everything works, the intensity builds throughout Golson's solo, until he takes a staccato arpeggio pickup into his last chorus, and Kelly punctuates with perfectly spaced, ringing chords. Chambers' bass line glides and soars below all this, occasionally pushing with his habitual syncopated quarter notes for a bar or two. Blakey's fourth beat rim shots continue tastefully through the two horn solos where there is too much going on for him to do much else, but he finally breaks loose from this pattern to provide the accents behind Kelly's solo. The momentum, which is so beautifully built up through Golson's solo and sustained through Kelly's, is lost when Kelly and Blakey fail to give Chambers the usual Red Garland-Philly Joe Jones send off to cover the difficult transition into the bowed solo, and everything falls down a little. Up to this point a good case has been presented for the defense of the rhythm section.

Chuck Israels

**THE MODERN JAZZ QUARTET: "Odds Against Tomorrow".** United Artists UAL 4063.

**Milt Jackson**, vibraharp; **John Lewis**, piano; **Percy Heath**, bass; **Connie Kay**, drums. **Skating In Central Park**; **No Happiness For Slater**; **A Social Call**; **Cue #9**; **A Cold Wind Is Blowing**; **Odds Against Tomorrow**.

I am, in theory at least, opposed to the idea of **The Modern Jazz Quartet**, essentially on the ground that John Lewis has presented to the public a too genteel, overly rehearsed music combining coyly stated 18th and 19th Century forms with a solid valid base

of blues and blues derived music. However, it is also true that I have in the past bought five lps by this group of my own, presumably free, will.

In this album, composer-arranger Lewis was faced with what is essentially a new problem for him, to adapt and reorchestrate for the Quartet music he originally composed and orchestrated for an orchestra as accompaniment to a suspense gangster film in a twentieth century setting. He does a most tasteful, imaginative and genuinely inspired job. It seems ironic that I find **Cue #9** originally written as a part of the action of the film, the least interesting in the album. The complete emergence of John Lewis as a principal soloist is particularly gratifying and noteworthy; in the presence of Milt Jackson this is no small feat for anyone. Lewis is the featured soloist on **A Social Call** and **A Cold Wind Is Blowing**. **A Social Call**, which seems to have some spiritual connection with Ellington's **Dancers In Love**, is to my way of thinking a very high example of piano art in its lucidity, charm and ravishing simplicity. **A Cold Wind Is Blowing** is also of a very high order, but it contains some non-jazz business (as does **Skating in Central Park**) that I could have done without. Jackson blows real hard and generally well on the three other pieces. Dig especially his solo on **No Happiness for Slater**; it's almost the same old thing, but it is a great thing he does do.

When the rules of the game call for it, Heath and Kay do breathe as one; they invariably contribute what is required gracefully and authoritatively.

I. W. Stone

**"KID ORY Plays W. C. Handy".** Verve MG V-1017.

**Kid Ory**, trombone; **Teddy Buckner**, trumpet; **Frank Haggerty**, guitar; **Cedric Haywood**, piano; **Charles Oden**, bass; **Jesse John Siles**, drums; **Caughey Roberts** (according to the listing) or **William Shea** (according to the notes), clarinet.

The old jazz criticism may have been uninformed, narrow, cantankerous, immature, and damned near illiterate, but at least you knew where you stood. New Orleans, boogie-woogie pianists, and certain blues singers embraced nearly all the best jazz: that was that, and no nonsense. The New Jazz Criticism, dedicated to Keeping Up, never stands still long enough to find out, like, what it's trying to say.

The New Criticism line on jazz composers has gyrated like the Popular Front at the time of the Hitler-Stalin pact: the last time I could make it out, Scott Joplin, Jelly-Roll Morton, Duke Ellington, and a host of modern

musicians too numerous to mention were Great Jazz Composers. How these things are decided is of course not divulged to the laity; I suppose they are simply Revealed. There are, nevertheless, certain standards through which those lacking True Vision can try to reach some conclusions, the most interesting of which (the standards, I mean) suggests that the way to judge a piece of jazz composition is to see what it sounds like in the hands of inferior musicians. By doing this, the argument runs, you take away all that a great improviser can add, and you are left with the piece itself. If it still sounds good, it is probably music of considerable strength.

In this light, some of the Oliver Creole Jazz Band tunes, which are not usually mentioned in Higher Discussions about jazz compositions, turn out to be excellent pieces. As a case in point, I have on a cheap lp version of *Workingman Blues* done by an unidentified band (foreign, I suspect) of no apparent accomplishments. But simply by playing *Workingman* through with some not very good solos in the appropriate spots they manage to create satisfying music. On the other hand many Ellington numbers, excluding a few of the good ones he wrote with Bubber Miley, do not seem to stand up so well under this kind of treatment.

From the point of view of either composition or improvisation, W. C. Handy's better tunes are first rate jazz pieces, whether the New Criticism admits it or not. Since they have more shape than much of Ellington, they have something even in mediocre performance; since they are not as confining as so much of Joplin, they are good vehicles for improvisation. Unfortunately, the present lp has neither as many of the better tunes nor as much good improvisation as it should. To begin with, the playing style, a sort of jazz lingua franca which seems to have developed in recent years—it avoids the stylistic excesses of both traditional and modern schools along with all the virtues of the former—doesn't help. Teddy Buckner is all right in the opening ensembles, but when he gets out on his own his tone broadens until it sags at the edges. He almost always begins climbing toward the end of his first solo chorus, and is screaming by the second; most of his final ensemble work is frantic. (A notable exception is a brace of soft choruses toward the end of *Atlanta Blues*). The clarinetist, whichever he is, is the horrors, combining the worst features of Edmond Hall and Barney Bigard, if that can be imagined. His ensemble work is full of pointless runs and empty doodling, and his solos are full of pointless growls and empty

trills. Ory is, as ever, a rock in ensemble, but he still plays variations on his 1926 *Snag It* in the solo spots. Add a nondescript (but pleasant) blueish piano, a drummer who flails away on the weak beats as if he were beating a rug, a sluggish bass, and a guitar player who has taken Carmen Mastren as his model and you get something less than Ory's Jade Room band.

*Aunt Hagar's Blues*, which is paradigmatic, begins most promisingly with the ensemble run-through of the two strains they use, but comes apart when the string of solos commences. The horn choruses are punctuated, Nicksieland style, with a beat or two of ensemble, the guitar and tired-bass solos are stop-time, and a real New Orleans ostinato eighth-note riff makes up most of the final choruses. The fragment from the opening strain as coda is a nice little touch.

Well, there's nothing to be done about style now, no way to give Buckner back some of the discipline he had when he first played with Ory, no way to make a clarinet player out of Roberts/Shea. But a little could have been done about the choice of tunes, and about what the band does with its material. *Harlem Blues* sounds like *Steady Roll* in its first strain and *Atlanta Blues* in its second; *Way Day South* is just a 32-bar pop tune (although, oddly enough, Ory plays his best solo on it). There are better Handy tunes than those. (I can understand wanting to get away from the warhorses, but if *St. Louis*, why not *Memphis* or *Beale Street*?) On *Atlanta Blues*, and *Loveless Love* only one strain (the chorus) is used. The interesting lines in *Yellow Dog* are smeared out, and the band just breezes through *Friendless Blues*. (Lu Watters treatment of *Friendless* may have been ponderous, especially in the chorale-like first strain, but at least it showed some understanding of the nature of the melodies and the essential difference between the strains.) To Ory's men, blues is blues, and only a few of Ory's solos (*Loveless Love* is one) are not interchangeable.

Really, something could have been done, and the lp could have been a little better than it is. Who's the A & R man at Verve anyhow?

J. S. Shipman

**HOWARD RUMSEY'S LIGHTHOUSE ALL-STAR BIG BAND: "Jazz Rolls Royce".** Lighthouse Records Concert Series CS-300.

Bob Cooper, tenor sax, oboe; Frank Rosolino, trombone; Stu Williamson, trumpet; Vic Feldman, piano, vibes, conga drum; Stan Levey, drums; Howard Rumsey, bass; Pete Candoli, Al Porcino, Ed Leddy, George Worth, trumpets; Milt Bernhart, Harry Betz, Hoyt Bohannon,

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trombones; **Marshall Cram**, bass trombone; **Larry Bunker**, tympani, vibes; **Red Callender**, tuba.  
**Strike Up The Band**; Prelude To The Queen; **The Clown's Dance**; "Coop" Salutes The Co-op; **Bruinville My Bruinville**; Mambo Del Quad-o.

"Look, if I told ya once I told ya a thousand times, I can't get the Kingston Trio. They're booked solid for the next two years. What's that? Homecoming? Look, sweetheart, I don't care if they're gonna ball in the streets, I just can't help ya. Now why don't y'take my advice and pick up on this group I got. Like it's the cream of West Coast jazz with the toughest charts you ever... what? **Jonah Jones**? Y'know baby I don't think you appreciate what I'm trying to do for you... No, Jones is out. That's right, and you know what the scene is with Brubeck. I mean, like, if you just listen for a minute, daddy's gonna lay it on the line, baby, promotion and all. First off y'gotta sign this group I got, like I say, a real ring-a-dinger. Right away you're ahead, on accounta that's what gets the kiddies, an ALL STAR BAND... y'know baby I might even get ya a poll winner or two. So then ya take and... What'd y'say was the name a' that joint? Royce hall? Sweetheart how can y'be so thick? It's a natural! I can see it now, a big concert bit with posters all over the place and then right spang in front y'have this big Rolls Royce with a sign over it that says, "Jazz Rolls Royce"! What's that? Like did I say I was handlin' things or not? Baby, there're a hundred car dealers that'd wig for th'opportunity. Not only that, I'll probably even get ya a record date, too. Of course I mean it, man don't you dig? This is West Coast Jazz, like, which can sell anywhere, baby, anywhere. Look! Is Ornette Coleman gassin' everybody in the Apple or isn't he? Well, sweetheart, yours truly once got him a club date when he was a nobody! That's right, a nobody! But dig, here's the capper, for this concert we have a program of special music... Yeah, that's right, and we give the music special titles for the kiddies, you dig the bit? Of course the cat won't mind; he's gettin' scale for 'em, isn't he? I got some great titles in mind. We could start out with a flagwaver just to get everybody in their seats, something like **Strike Up The Band**... yeah, that's it. But then we cool it for the queen, some sorority chick, huh? Something solemn and serious, like maybe **Prelude to the Queen**, you know, with dignity. Yeah, then we break it up with something humorous, like, maybe a clown's dance or something. Hey—it just hit me—do they have some kind of mascot or something there that we could use?... Bruin?... What's that, man?...

Oh. Well, how about **Bruinsville, USA**. No? All right man, all right, don't get salty. You want something dignified you'll get it, already. Yeah, yeah, here it is: **Bruinville, My Bruinville**. Yeah, it's perfect. And then we gotta have a montuna... Of course, baby, everybody digs montunas. Yeah. How about we tie up the Latin thing with a collegiate motif? Yeah... like, **Mambo Del Quad-o**. You like? It's yours; the contract'll be in the mail tomorrow. Yeah. So long doll..."

Don Heckman

**GEORGE SHEARING: "Latin Affair."**  
**Capitol ST 1275.**

All Or Nothing At All; Let's Call the Whole Thing Off; Afro #4; Magic; It's Easy to Remember; Estampa Cubana; You Stepped Out of a Dream; Mambo Balahu; Dearly Beloved; Cuando Sono El Gaznaton; This Is Africa; Anywhere.  
 No personnel listed.

Sometimes it's hard for the public to fight back when the lower forms of entertainment are unceasingly peddled in a daily kitsch campaign. And so the public takes what it is given.

I am of the opinion that, this being the case, it is up to executives and artists who produce mass entertainment to try to raise the level of their product as much as possible, not to force feed the most inferior material available simply because someone has decided that it is economically risky to back "art" or "culture" or that the public isn't "ready" for such material. Nonsense, if the public buys what is available, what it is given. The public is never "ready"; the public must be made ready.

Shearing is an excellent case in point. He started out with a fresh ensemble sound, and by recording diluted bop, became a popular jazz figure. The early Shearing sides—**September in the Rain**, **Someone to Watch Over Me**, etc.—did contain a sparkle and interest, and more important, a genuineness which disappeared from his later efforts. Shearing began to decline when his quintet sound developed into an end in itself, a trademark rather than an identity—**Roses of Picardy** is the trademarked Shearing. Then sound began wearing thin, and it was decided that George should add something. He added bongos and a conga drum. What this amounts to is formula on top of formula. The Latin treatment of tunes is deadly; the music is plodding, static and stultifying, and the tunes themselves remain unpenetrated. The Latin "originals" are repetitive, unimaginative, frenzied. Basically Shearing is a good musician, and he must have more to say than this cha-cha jive he's handing us.

Shearing, unlike Monk or Parker, has been accepted all along by the public at large; it should have been up to him to assume the responsibility of educating the public ear. As a public idol he has had the opportunity to lead his listeners higher; instead, he continues to entice them downhill. Men like Shearing are capable of opening the door for jazz musicians (like Monk and Parker) to let the audience in on what jazz is all about, not only to take the easy way and make excuses that the public isn't ready for real jazz, or give out the "economics" routine. The George Shearings of jazz are a real disappointment, in more ways than just musically.

Mimi Clar

**STUFF SMITH: "Have Violin, Will Swing".** Verve, MG V-8282.

Stuff Smith, violin; Carl Perkins, piano; Red Callender or Curtis Counce, bass; Oscar Bradley or Frank Butler, drums.  
 It's Wonderful; Comin' Thru the Rye; Jada; Indiana; Calypso; Blow Blow Blow; I wrote my Song; Oh but it is; Stop-Look; Would You Object.

Critical jazz listeners may be interested in this recording for what it contains of the work of the late Carl Perkins, who plays here with his customary warmth and swing—after Smith's out-of-tune schmaltz. There is nothing much else here for the serious listener. The rhythm sections are good, in the Granz studio tradition; Carl plays well; the rest is Stuff and nonsense.

Chuck Israels

**CAL TJADER: "San Francisco Moods".** Fantasy, 3271.

Cal Tjader, vibraphone and piano; Eddie Duran, guitar; John Mosher, or Jack Weeks, bass; John Markham, drums.  
 Running Out; Raccoon Straits; The Last Luff; Sigmund Stern Groove; Coit Tower; Triple T Blues; Union Square; Skyline Waltz; Viva Cepeda; Grant Avenue Suite.

If this record is typical San Francisco jazz, then I am hard put to distinguish it from the Los Angeles west coast variety. Most west coast record dates which use the better bass players in that area, such as Leroy Vinegar and Red Mitchell, have one common characteristic—an ultra-relaxed quality about the playing of the rhythm section. On this record, John Mosher is apparently responsible for the propagation of this style of rhythm section work. There is a relaxed mood and an unobtrusive quality throughout the record. The musicianship is of a generally high, though not exciting, level. Tjader, a good vibraphonist, makes his piano debut here, but shows less facility with this instrument at

the moment. When he is at the piano, the rhythm section takes on a nice neo-Basie groove, in which Mosher's beautiful, deep-toned bass playing is instrumental in providing the swing. His long notes sustain the swing through John Markham's competent, but chunky drumming. Eddie Duran has kissed the Barney Stone of west coast guitar playing, and employs his resultant gift musically, but unimaginatively.

This is well-played, mostly happy (though not overjoyed) commercial jazz, which will neither offend nor particularly interest the serious listener. The one track recorded by Tjader's Cuban-oriented group is little more exciting. In spite of the fact that the Cuban rhythms take it out of the general groove of the other material presented here, it still belongs in the slick, easy to consume genre of many west coast releases. Only Vince Guaraldi's too short solo threatens momentarily to break out of these confines. He seems to be influenced by the late Carl Perkins in parts of his small solo spot.

Of the ten selections, all originals written by the performers, only bassist Jack Weeks's pretentious **Grant Avenue Suite** deserves strongly negative criticism. It is naive program music, using the simplest, least original idioms to "describe" in musical terms some typical San Francisco scenes. Unfortunately, it tells us nothing new, and nothing specifically San Franciscan.

Chuck Israels

**"COLEMAN HAWKINS Encounters Ben Webster".** Verve MG V-8237.  
Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, tenor saxes; Oscar Peterson, piano; Herb Ellis, guitar; Ray Brown, bass; Alvin Stoller, drums.  
**Blues For Yolande; It Never Entered My Mind; Rosita; You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To; Prisoner of Love; Tangerine; Shine On, Harvest Moon.**

**"BEN WEBSTER and Associates".** Verve MG V-8318.  
Ben Webster, Coleman Hawkins, Budd Johnson, tenor saxes; Roy Eldridge, trumpet; Jimmy Jones, piano; Les Spann, guitar; Ray Brown, bass; Jo Jones, drums.  
**In a Mellow Tone; Young Bean; Budd Johnson; Time After Time; De-Dar.**

A great deal of lip-service is paid to the concept that improvisation is the lifeblood of jazz, yet when improvisation is encountered *au naturel*, as it were, on records, it seldom meets with sympathy or understanding. Of course we are spoiled by the vast number of records, but increasingly it is not spontaneous expression that is esteemed, not the joy as it flies, but the polished result of rehearsal or of many takes, another form of rehearsal. Certainly, one has to live with the flaws in a

recorded improvisation, whereas at an in-person performance they may be erased from memory by succeeding triumphs. Yet since progress has denied us the old kind of creative jam sessions, today's "blowing sessions" in record studios should be valued as records of contemporary improvisatory ability. For the producer, they remain very much of a gamble, but with the exception of gimmick specials and those bearing commercial names, all jazz records are that. Of these two, I think one paid off and one did not. Other mundane, economic aspects of jazz recording have to be considered, too. If records could be distributed in plain brown bags, if the money spent on gaudy packaging could be applied to rehearsal time and a little writing, well then you *might* get a more distinguished product. Meanwhile, it's a case of doing in the jungle as the big cats do.

On the first of these albums, two big cats of another kind do right well. They produce easygoing, relaxed music that may even be considered too relaxed in some circles. The ending of **Blues For Yolande**, for that matter, is quite careless, and the first side is generally somewhat disappointing. The slow blues opener has the hard overtones of rock 'n' roll, an idiom I suspect of exerting a bigger subconscious influence on contemporary jazz than most of us like to admit. Both tenors make some tough, harsh statements here, and in this vein or mood Ben sounds more like Hawk than elsewhere. On the ballad which follows, Ben achieves a pretty effect, but Hawk, with his more direct approach, seems to wrap up the heart of the matter. On **Rosita**, Hawk is far away in Andalusia, doing a stately tango and killing the locals. Homesick, and neglected by his compatriot, Ben breaks into a swinging four, but not for long.

The second side is all meat. On the first two tracks, Ben is too close to the mike. The breathy sounds, suggesting a loose gasket, add nothing to his supercharged style. The numbers and tempos chosen are all good, however, and on all four he and Hawk blow and swing attractively. Better, perhaps, than their alternating solos, the exchange of fours in the last chorus of **Shine On, Harvest Moon** illustrates how marvellously related, yet how superbly differentiated, these two great musicians are.

Where the music requires heated treatment, Ben gives a violent, virtually rude touch; where lyrical, a warm, surging sensuousness. At all times, he comes on with a feeling of expansive generosity, but there is command, too, and he has everything in his tone to go with these qualities.

But when the Hawk spreads his wings and his shadow falls, he exercises an incontrovertible authority. Like

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Incidentally, when this album was released in England early in 1959, it carried a couple of extra performances: **Maria and Cocktails For Two**.

The second album was recorded a year and a half later with Ben as nominal leader and two horns added. Leonard Feather explains in the notes how Budd Johnson came to be on the date, and it is Budd, curiously, who shines most surely. His bright, resonant and unforced sound contrasts agreeably with those of the other two tenors. Stylistically, he is closer to Lester—and post-Lester—as the lyric reference to Pres at the beginning of his solo on **Budd Johnson** clearly indicates. His ability to create distinctive atmosphere is also demonstrated in the course of his three choruses on **De-Dar**. Budd often surprises with his continuing invention, with his own individual range of expression, and it seems time he was accorded more recognition for his contributions to jazz, something that might be facilitated by the re-issue of his later recordings with Earl Hines. Apart from Budd's solos, the music inclines to be disappointing. Roy's best solo is on **De-Dar**. Where he lands on a wrong note in bar two of the second twelve, he comes out in modern style. (Ain't no wrong notes anymore!) Ben's ballad feature, **Time After Time**, is pretty enough, but again the mike picks up too much breath. Or is this a new gimmick? The tempos of **In a Mellow Tone** and **De-Dar** are too slow, those of **Young Bean** and **Budd Johnson** a shade too fast, and neither Ben nor Hawk sounds at all inspired. On **Young Bean**, Ben settles for eighth notes as the easier way out, but Hawk stays with sixteenths, hitting them on the head in the rhythmic style natural to him, which results in a constrained effect. The routing of **In a Mellow Tone** is unimaginative. After two fairly promising ensemble choruses, there are five from members of the rhythm section, none of whom swings much, before a sequence of two-chorus solos by the horns. Since the performance extends over an entire side, the routine was important, and with four horns, a few backgrounds could have done much to relieve the tedium. Similarly, some backgrounds would have done much to improve the dirge-like **De-Dar**.

And Budd Johnson was just the man to have written them.

Stanley Dance

**CHRIS CONNOR: "Witchcraft". Atlantic 8032.**

**Witchcraft**; I'll Never Be Free; **The Lady Sings the Blues**; Come Rain or Come Shine; **When Sunny Gets Blue**; How Little We Know; **I Hear the Music Now**; Baltimore Oriole; **Just In Time**; Like a Woman; **Skyscraper Blues**; You Don't Know What Love Is.

**DAKOTA STATON: "Time to Swing". Capitol ST 1241.**

**When Lights Are Low**; Willow Weep For Me; **But Not For Me**; You Don't Know What Love Is; **The Best Thing For You**; The Song Is You; **Avalon**; Baby Don't You Cry; **Let Me Know**; Until the Real Thing Comes Along; **If I Should Lose You**; Gone With the Wind.

**ANNIE ROSS: "Gypsy". World Pacific WP-1276.**

**Buddy Bregman** orchestra. **Overture**; Everything's Coming Up Roses; **You'll Never Get Away**; Some People; **All I Need Is a Boy**; Small World; **Together**; Let Me Entertain You; **Reprise**.

With these albums we have three types of mediocrity willingly accepted by the jazz public today.

Of the three, Miss Connor is the easiest to listen to. Generally, she chooses good material to work with, offbeat, seldom-heard numbers or standards favored by musicians, and then her style has already been worked out so thoroughly by Anita O'Day and June Christy. In choosing the O'Day-Christy route, Chris has run herself up a dead-end. Several years ago, it seemed every aspiring female jazz vocalist sang like June Christy. They soon discovered this wasn't such a good idea, for by then Miss Christy's style had stagnated considerably and the young ladies were left high and dry. It is amusing that few attempted to emulate Anita O'Day, but doubtless they sensed that Anita, the root of the whole thing, is the only singer of ability and note that the school has produced and that Anita is the only one who has grown at all stylistically within recent years; she was too hard to copy.

Chris Conner not only has (or had) the rest of the Christy herd to compete with, but she failed to realize the shortcomings of the style before she too had succumbed to them. As personified by Chris, the style has but two emotional and dynamic shadings: dispassionate whispering and tasteless yelling. The whole, particularly the yelling, is horribly off-key, lacks depth or flexibility, and is always delivered in a hoarse, breathy timbre of which the ear soon tires, and which causes all songs to sound alike. In addition, there are the drawbacks faced by one who steps in the footprints of another performer and has not shown

the imagination or the artistry to make tracks of his own.

Dakota Staton, on the other hand, requires of the listener patience, a long attention span, a broad mind, unswerving optimism, and a strong constitution. Apparently Miss Staton's fans have these qualities; I have watched them go wild with delight at her concert appearances. Miss Staton works very hard and yells loudly and obviously enough to garner enthusiastic acceptance. Her emotional scale ranges from frantic (**Willow Weep For Me, But Not For Me**) to hysterical (**Best Thing For You, Song Is You**). At present she sounds like an overstylized Sarah Vaughan with touches of Dinah Washington thrown in. Comparing her **Baby Don't You Cry** with Charles Brown's with Johnny Moore's Three Blazers (Aladdin 111A), we see that Dakota is thinking about how she's singing. Brown about what he's singing. Dakota's performance is self-centered; she is aware only of Dakota. Brown directs the song somewhere outside of himself, at someone. Brown is singing the blues; Dakota is just singing another song. She improves somewhat on **You Don't Know What Love Is** simply because she stops throwing herself around and takes time to digest the meaning of what she sings and to project some of that meaning into her performance.

On her **"Gypsy"** lp Annie Ross' voice is consistently flat and hollow; it lacks substance; it is chapped, coarse and unresilient; and when not hidden behind scat singing and riffs created by others, her vocal ability is exposed for what it is.

Now, the above is hardly criticism. No critic should be put in the position of having to make such statements. A critic's task should be to decide how well that individual performs, whether he has improved or regressed as time passes, whether he adds anything to the tradition of his art, etc., not whether a performer has bothered to master his craft or whether a performer even possesses the ability to master it. Perhaps the public has developed an inferiority complex and doesn't wish to be excelled in anything by anyone. Thus the public thinks, "I'm just as good as she is—I could do that too, but I'm just too busy to get around to doing it." And the fact that the public could do it, too, makes it all the more readily understandable and palatable to them.

The music from **"Gypsy"**, I might add, I find flabby. Only a real artist could bring these songs to life and make them say anything. The combination of Annie Ross and **"Gypsy"** is something less than inspiring. What a pity this stuff is connected with jazz in any way.

Or has jazz singing really come to this?

Mimi Clar

# SHORTER REVIEWS

One would get few arguments by saying that the BILLIE HOLIDAY records were those now owned by Columbia and those made for Commodore. An earlier collection from the latter group left out four: **Embraceable You, I Love My Man (Billie's Blues), As Time Goes By, and I'm Yours.** These are now collected on Commodore FL 30,011, and the lp is filled out by eight largely fatuously conceived tracks of Eddie Heywood. Of course, Doc Cheatham, Vic Dickenson and Sidney Catlett can almost salvage many a misguided conception, and, in case you never noticed, that **Carry Me Back To Old Virginny** is a kind of hearty lampoon one would hardly think Heywood capable of.

The first side of DUKE ELLINGTON'S "Jazz Party" (Columbia CL 1323) is a suite, (or rather, is five pieces), beginning with some lightly intended and engaging interplay of rather standard riff figures by a "legitimate" percussion section. It ends with another of those almost insultingly banal puffing sessions by Paul Gonzalves. Enroute, Russell Procope plays the very well scored **Red Carpet** with loving care, but the rest seems hardly up to the passing cleverness of the title, **Toot Suite**. On the reverse, the percussion section again enjoys itself with more riff patterns and this time comes closer to swinging. The first guest, Dizzy Gillespie, plays far better on the blues than on his "featured" assignment, **U.M.M.G.** Johnny Hodges gets over-decorous on what has been a near-masterpiece for him on recent occasion, **All of Me**. On the aforementioned blues, Jimmy Rushing slaps together three unrelated verses which he delivers with accumulating strain, and Jimmy Jones makes a better accompanist than soloist. Certainly one of the things that makes Ellington a great popular artist is his ability to please at all levels, usually at once. But I have the feeling that in the up-tempo Gonzalves (which may have started in part as a kind of joke on certain audiences, I suspect) Ellington has become the victim of something which could not stand a moment's reflection. But even in that, and in his frequent re-hashing (as opposed to reinterpreting) of 1939, there is a kind of integrity not to be heard in the bland, complacent slickness that Basie now peddles. Ellington may fail, but

he could never be merely safe. That's how we know he is still an artist.

If you got MILT JACKSON on one of those New York "jam session" record dates a few years ago, he would show himself for what he is: one of the best players in all of jazz. He did it again recently with the decidedly maturing Cannonball Adderley on "Things Are Getting Better" (Riverside 12-286). On the other hand, under the formal discipline of playing with the MJQ, he not only loses nothing, but has obviously gained enormously in range and resourcefulness.

However, when he manages his own record dates (am I saying "provides his own discipline?"), under the fully praiseworthy care and patience that Atlantic exercises, that love of playing that is the essence of his art may somehow not come through. "Bags and Flutes" (Atlantic 1294) seems to me a case in point. The earlier best-seller by Jackson and Frank Wess, **Opus De Jazz" (Savoy 12036)** was hardly a great record but it was an enjoyable and frequently eventful one. One can say that about half of the tracks on "Bags and Flutes" do come off: **Sandy, Midget Rod, The Masquerade Is Over, Sweet and Lovely.** BUCK CLAYTON's last Columbia, "Songs for Swingers" (CL 1320) seemed to me a very uneven lp. Dickie Wells verged on self-parody (a real temptation for so humorous a player) on **Swinging At the Copper Rail** but was beautiful indeed on **Outer Drive**. Somehow pianist Al Williams was over-busy, unswinging, and he was often accompanied by loud afterbeating from Herbie Lovell. Buddy Tate's current playing is more than the merely capable it has seemed. Then there are Clayton and Emmett Berry: both of them on **Buchini** and Berry on **Moonglow**. Without solos like those jazz would be poor indeed. Brunswick has repackaged its RED NICHOLS lp (BL-54047) in honor of you-know-what. Nichols is often dismissed as a sort of second-string Beiderbecke. That estimate may be inaccurate in itself, and it ignores the fact that he had definite and influential ideas about refinement and order within the styles of the 'twenties. Of course, good results will not necessarily come about when one's first principles include only the standards of craftsmanship: good intonation, clean execution, Vic Berton's neo-classic jazz percussion, etc. What does bring Nichols close to the heart of the matter is his dependable gift for melody—a good one and more personal than is usually admitted. It salvages a frequently jerky rhythmic conception of the kind that easily fragments and defeats the melodic lines of less gifted players. And then he often used the likes of Jack Teagarden, Pee Wee Russell, and

the lamentably unsung Adrian Rollini. Unquestionably a performance like the Teagarden-dominated **Shiek of Araby** survives. It also contains a lesson: Teagarden's playing sometimes risks a kind of decorativeness, but he could never sound so adroitly frivolous as Benny Goodman does following him. The experimental pieces like **Ida and Feelin' No Pain** certainly surpass the merely workmanlike standards which are their basis. On several tracks, drummer Berton remains, for me, very provocative—and very square.

Few of MAHALIA JACKSON'S records convey the power and dignity of her work, and most of her Columbia records don't even remotely suggest it. An exception is the Newport volume (CL 1244), of course. Otherwise one can scrounge around among the reissues of the sides she made for Apollo in the mid-forties, now available on a variety of labels. Listening to her Columbia recital called "Great Gettin' Up Morning" (CL 1343), it is hard to believe that so great a singer gave these possibly inhibited, frequently tame, and almost mechanical and contrived performances. A track like **When I've Done My Best** makes one wonder if Miss Jackson perhaps allowed herself to be coerced by someone with an eye on the rock and roll juke boxes—where it probably got lots of action. Then one like **God Put A Rainbow In The Sky** makes one know how very good it all might have been.

I doubt if SLIM GAILLARD has ever been tempted to "broaden" his lampoons, but probably a lot of people have told him that if he did he would reach a wider audience. The truth is more likely that if they were a hair more obvious, his routines would disappear in a loud pointlessness. As they are, they are somehow, for all their surface energy, strangely fragile. They seldom come across on records as one remembers them from public performance. Perhaps, as with Mahalia Jackson, the audience is too crucial a participant for the event to take place before only a microphone and an a & r man. Gaillard's first record in several years, "Slim Gaillard Rides Again" (Dot DLP 3190), does not leave his talent entirely uncaptured, to be sure. There is his burlesque of the staged "jam session" on **How High the Moon** at its almost devastating best, and a **Don't Blame Me** that parodies a parade of pop singers so subtly that it may take a second listening before one realizes just how pointed, how really funny, and how very skillful it is. There is also the usual dead-pan Gaillard nonsense of **Chicken Rhythm** (with the Gaillard bridge, of course), **Sukiyaki Cha Cha**, a Leo Watsonish **Lady Be Good**—but I don't want to turn this into a list.

Martin Williams



# BOOK REVIEWS

**THE BABY DODDS STORY** as told to Larry Gara. Contemporary Press, Los Angeles, 1959.

We are fortunate that Larry Gara's interest in Baby Dodds led him to tape a series of interviews in 1953, six years before Baby's death. This volume, Gara's edited transcript of those interviews, contains Baby's recollections of forty-five years of drumming, with comments on his musical inspiration, purpose and achievement, his contact with other jazzmen and the resulting effect on his playing, and recollections of numerous experiences in New Orleans, on the Streckfus riverboats, in Chicago and New York. His narrative is a valuable addition to the mosaic of jazz history.

Musicians will be interested in Baby's account of the development of his craft. He tells us what he heard, what he tried to play, the problems he solved for himself, and reveals his philosophies and his prejudices about playing music. I like his feeling for ensemble playing, his efforts toward group empathy. At one point he says, "The way I tried to drum required a good brain and a sharp ear. And it was always necessary to keep a sense of humor, for God's sake, so that if something didn't sound right I could always change it or quickly insert something in it's place." And further on, "Musicians should really understand each other like a man and wife. Your wife can look at you and you understand what she means. You can say only one

word and she will understand. Well, that's the way an organization of musicians should be . . . To really understand, one must study each and every person until he knows what will bring contentment or discontent."

Baby's musical rationale centered on the welfare of the group expression; he admired musicians who sought to improve it, was most at home in "family" bands and felt compelled to leave both Fate Marable and King Oliver when the group rapport was severed, even though those were two of the most satisfying organizations in his career.

Throughout his story we see how Baby's desire to become an integral part of each unit he played with led him to try to listen creatively, to respond inventively and to work toward the improvement of his craft. By his own account he was a fun lover who liked the taste of whisky, but he also loved his work, and was proud of his ability to play well. He frequently refers to his desire to be a "well-rounded musician" who can play any kind of music. Though he was nearly sixty when these interviews were made he spoke with enthusiasm about playing. He expressed his regret that his failing health had limited his activity, and felt "confident that someday I will again carry out with my drumsticks and drum sets the ideas that I am now carrying around in my head."

The preparation of this book no doubt took a lot of sympathetic, painstaking work, and Gara is to be congratulated

on the conception and completion of the project. It is unfortunate that he did not solve the problem of transferring spoken prose to the written page in a manner that would more accurately evoke the quality of the original. Without making disastrous excursions into dialect, it should have been possible to retain more of the rhythm of speech. When an extremely colloquial turn of phrase crops up among these neatly tailored sentences it looks as startling as a pumpkin on a cucumber vine, and causes one to suspect that Baby's narrative was originally a whole pumpkin patch of musical speech patterns.

My only other quarrel with the interviewer is about his preface. The first two paragraphs tell us all we need to know about the book and its purpose. From there on he should have let Baby tell it. Instead, Gara gives us a resume of what we are about to read, restating many of Baby's remarks in the third person. In doing so, he removes Baby's opinions on music from their relationship with events and circumstances, leaving us with the implication that these are basic postulates about music. All of the summarized "fundamentals of jazz" in Gara's preface are much more reasonable as told in context by Baby, and I feel that the summary makes the understanding of Baby's playing as it relates to the drumming one hears today more difficult to the layman.

In the last part of the preface, a statement by Baby's old friend Natty Dominique has been included. Natty's devotion is understandable, but his tendency to deify Baby distorts whatever information he may have to share with us. He talks as if no other drummer had ever played well, and repeatedly compares Baby's work with how badly "most drummers" play. If outside comment was desired to add perspective, it's a pity Mr. Gara didn't choose a more objective commentator. Comparisons of Baby's work with that of other good drummers would have been more revealing than the implication that he was the only one.

At the end of the volume there are eight pages of interesting photographs snapped along the way.

Bill Crow

**JUST JAZZ 3.** Edited by Sinclair Traill and Hon. Gerald Lascelles. Four Square Books, London, 1959.

This is the third in a series of year-books edited by Traill and Lascelles. Some ninety pages are devoted to essays while the balance of the book is made up of the inevitable citations of important events and a one hundred and thirty page discography of the year's recordings in England.

Dan Morgenstern reviews jazz events

in America and Charles Fox does the same for England. Tony Standish has uncovered further evidence of the terrible 'modernist' conspiracy to stifle good old honest jazz. Or as he puts it, "... no one cares to stomp any more in the old, soul-tearing manner." Humphrey Lyttleton contends that jazz critics are sometimes not too bright. Sinclair Traill has an interview with Billy Strayhorn which contains little of value. Graham Boatfield berates the critics. Marion McPartland reminisces for several dull pages. None of this material pretends to be jazz criticism; it is typical yearbook twaddle for its own market.

Benny Green has a short critical study of Lester Young in which he concludes, with little documentation, that Young's best work was done in the late 'thirties. I do not think that an examination of Young's recorded work from the 'forties on will verify this contention. Certainly Young had his share of failures, but, in a sense, he was taking more chances. Nevertheless, Green is a critic and shows some musical interest in his subject.

Panassie has another of his diatribes on 'modern' jazz. I think we all know how these go; 'modern' jazz, particularly bop, is a misnomer, for it is not jazz at all. Astuteness has never been a quality of Panassie's 'criticism', and I think his 'method' is too well known to require further comment.

Ernest Borneman examines the blues in a piece which adds little that is new and continues his tried and true device—many of Borneman's articles consist almost entirely of song titles. Here, half of the article is an anthology of blues lyrics. But the expository section is not his usual compilation of non sequiturs.

Max Harrison surveys the recorded career of Thelonious Monk. Oddly enough, in view of Harrison's considerable acumen, this essay is unsatisfactory. Part of the difficulty may well have come from considerations of length, for the piece has a cursory quality which suggests that the writer was attempting to say a great deal in a small space. Even so, his appraisal seems to miss main points about Monk. Such really significant works as *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes* (quintet version), *Brilliant Corners*, and *Let's Call This* are either barely mentioned or pass completely unnoticed. Also, Harrison does not seem to appreciate that a part of Monk's significance lies precisely in his being a leader of the new jazz vanguard. If it is true, and I think it is, that performers as diverse as Mingus, Cecil Taylor, and Ornette Coleman are taking the most important step forward in jazz since Parker in their rebellion against the tyranny of harmonic density, then the influence and example of Monk simply cannot be discounted.

H. A. Woodfin

**THE JAZZ WORD.** Edited by Dom Cerulli, Burt Korall, and Mort Nasatir. Ballantine Books, 1960.

Nat Hentoff has been fighting a sniper action against various excesses of jazz journalism as they appear on his horizon, and I am sure he would be overjoyed by this anthology which could fill his column for months. But it has fallen to me to talk about it, and we are (so I learn from this book) talking about jazz, man, and that is very free and loose and spur-of-the-moment, like, so we will just take the book as it comes and see what turns up.

Let us skip the arrogance it takes for three men to write separate dedications to an anthology of the work of others. The book includes an epigraph (from *Doctor Zhivago*)—the most recent attempt to make jazz respectable by any method except recourse to the music itself, and to list it in the Table of Contents, so as to make the reader aware that he is about to Witness Something Important, is typical of the pretentiousness that characterizes this effort.

Then we have the introduction, which is called Setting Up. Like for a session, you dig? After that, each set, I suppose I should call it, is prefaced by a briefer introduction, called The Opener. I

quote: "Not all jazz writing is enthusiastic or impressionistic. Much of it is documented, serious work, drawn from a background of years of study. The fan has given way to the student, and the student is likely to give way to the critic." This is, more or less, the same thing that is said in the introductions to the recent anthologies put out by the editors of this magazine, the difference being that Hentoff and Williams proceeded to present such work. The key to the material in the present volume appears just a little later on: "The fact that Jack Kerouac's poetry appears in this volume does not necessarily constitute endorsement of his jazz philosophy by the editors. Thank you." And then, in the next sentence, "The chapter, five, *Blues: They Died of Everything*, sort of sums up our tribute to four late and great jazz personalities." This is Kerouac's jazz philosophy, and the neo-romantic, gods-die-young attitude is exactly what links Kerouac to such various works as this anthology, *Metronome* and *Young Man With A Horn*.

That attitude appears quintessentially in the first article, a transcript from tape of Charlie Mingus talking to his audience at the Five-Spot. Mingus, possibly self-indulgently, accuses the audi-



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. 1ee5, 230 Duffy Avenue, Hicksville, L. I., N. Y.

ence of self-indulgence in the cry of the misunderstood artist: "Should I like to play my music for blind ears that are clogged up with the noises and frustrations of their own daily problems and egos?" Mingus has said he makes his music out of his daily problems.

A little later we come to a fine appraisal of Ella Fitzgerald by Hentoff, who, accurately I feel, places her among pop singers. Then, in his own version of the Pasternak quotation, he sums up his feelings for Ella in a quotation from Thomas Nashe.

Next is a piece by Bill Simon called "The Responsibility of the Artist." and when I came across the line, "The late Charlie Parker had only himself to blame that he wasn't healthy and wealthy," I thought that perhaps a bomb had been planted, and that someone was going to say that talent is no excuse for excess and self-indulgence but a gift to be nurtured and cared for. But Mr. Simon only complains that jazz musicians do not recognize that they are in show business. that they do not dress well enough, announce their numbers properly or stage their groups attractively. It is rather like suggesting cough medicine to a tubercular.

Then there is a liner note by Bob Brookmeyer, who always appears to be

writing publicity releases for a summer camp, and other writings by musicians. Outstanding are Mercer Ellington's thoughts on his father, which give interesting information and a naked glimpse of what must be one of the most devastating psychological problems any young musician ever had.

The next section contains three pieces of fiction. I disqualify myself here from a discussion of *Sonny's Blues* because I am opposed to the much-praised James Baldwin for reasons which lie outside this review. *Destination (K.C.)* by Tony Scott, I find to be further evidence that the author was moved by the death of Charlie Parker, an emotion he must hold public title to. Then there is the first chapter of John Clellon Holmes' novel *The Horn*. The romanticism is thick, the inaccuracies are many ("they would take only six-bar breaks from then on, to tighten the time, and finally only three"), and the difference between Mr. Holmes' Lester Young and Robert Penn Warren's Huey Long could almost define the difference between the work of a reporter and that of an artist, but the anthropological description of the cutting session, stripped of its romanticism, could serve as a guide-post for jazz writing.

There is a short picture section which manages to encompass some of the

best and worst album covers ever made: Jimmy Rushing's "Jazz Odyssey" cover, and a picture of someone named Vito Price, in cap and raincoat, standing in the middle of a Chicago street blowing his saxophone.

There are articles on, and examples of, jazz-and-poetry. Despite the attempts to give this practice an honorable lineage (Heine and Chopin used to improvise simultaneously at parties), this particular manifestation seems an outgrowth of the widespread dying-god linkage of Charlie Parker and Dylan Thomas. A line here by William Morris is an example of one of the main faults in the poetry, "you listen to Coltrane in the night." Coltrane is forced to do the work of the poet. His name, then his music, register in your mind and whatever emotion you receive will come from Coltrane, not from the poem. Jack Kerouac's poem on Charlie Parker appears in a transcription the editors made from a recording. They have cleaned it up to judge by a comparison with the version in *Mexico City Blues*. Kerouac says "holy piss," and the editors say "holy mists." Kerouac says, "and die/ One after one, in time," and the editors, attuned to the cosmos, say "and die/ one after one/ in Time." The poem opens, "Charlie Parker looked like Buddha," and continues, "Charlie Parker forgive me/ Forgive me for not answering your eyes. . . . Charlie Parker pray for me." I doubt that Bird, who was often not responsible for himself, would now, wherever he is, wish to be responsible for Kerouac.

The section called "The Blues" opens with an attempt to achieve pathos through radio-documentary understatement:

"Big Bill Broonzy died in Chicago on August 15, 1958. Billie Holiday died in New York City July 17, 1959. Lester Young died in New York City on March 15, 1959. Charlie Parker died in New York City March, 1955. Four people lived and died. They are connected only by three things: their art, their greatness, and the blues. The blues . . . they sang them, they played them, they lived them."

In Studs Terkel's story on Broonzy, we find 1930's trade-union romanticism brought into the picture. He tells of stopping at "a workingman's hangout" with Broonzy for a drink. He was sure they would be served. "After all, these were hard-working guys, decent men." They were not served.

Bill Coss' piece on Bird, written originally for a "Jazz at Massey Hall" lp, is a classic of its type. At every turn, pseudo-religious mystery is used to shroud the figure of Parker. Here Coss surpasses himself:

"A strange God. A creature wanting and suggesting self-destruction . . . he did as the religious have always done; he made sacrifice, being at once penitent, victim, and deity. None were ap-

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peased, none were satisfied, the victim was more burnt than offering, but it was over and there could be no more bowing of head, no more scraping of soul . . . Bud Powell, driven mad by beauty or a policeman's club . . ."

I submit, with this as evidence, that at least some of the sociological ills attributed to jazz should be laid instead at the doorstep of the jazz writer, with his idolization of the talented neurotic. There is also a section of jazz humor, most of it consisting of inside humor that someone at the office laughed at, little of it worth reprinting.

And there is an article by Gary Kramer on jazz and narcotics. It is not nearly so profound or carefully documented as the editors claim but deserves inclusion and wide-spread reading for one paragraph, which I hope will counteract all of the well-meaning disagreements to it. I quote it here so that it will have even wider circulation:

"What is really gained by trying to cover up the fact that use of marijuana and narcotics has been very widespread in certain periods of jazz history? This is a well-documented fact and is commonplace knowledge to anyone who has kept up any serious association with the jazz world. Examine a list of all the musicians who have run afoul of the law between, say, 1945 and the present! The roster is neither small nor unrepresentative. It makes, in fact, an abridged jazz *Who's Who*." It is, I think, as dangerous to deny this as it is to advance the opposite myth that all jazzmen are addicts.

The section on New York contains a fine transcription of a bit of the autobiographical recording Coleman Hawkins made, and reprints a poem by Jon Hendricks: "But lack of acceptance is less like somethin' to hide from/ And more like somethin' Bird died from." To hand back wish-fulfilling mythology to the public from the "inside" is a technique developed by Hollywood, a technique that Hendricks is expert in.

The next section finds the editors playing games. They asked several jazz writers to list three indispensable records, a task which many of the critics first said was impossible. The section contains few surprises; establishes Charlie Parker, Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong as the three most indispensable musicians; and once again gives cause for concern about Ralph J. Gleason, who apparently tends to think that the greatest record ever made is the last one he listened to. His nominations are: "**Black Brown and Beige**" by Ellington Orchestra with Mahalia Jackson, "**Milestones**" by Miles Davis, and any Dizzy Gillespie lp. I doubt that anyone would agree that either of the first two selections are the best work of the musicians involved, and the first is not even representative. But Mr. Gleason has always been more fan than critic.

In the final section of the book, "Routes and Detours," the best pieces appear. The authors are Nat Hentoff, Gunther Schuller, and George Russell. While I am not shilling for *The Jazz Review*, which often errs in the direction of solemnity, it is notable that these men are associated with it.

An anthology like this, which is roughly analagous to *Modern Screen*, does little but perpetuate the false myths and gutter glamour that has always surrounded jazz. I do not think that doctoral dissertations are the alternative, but too much good writing has gone unnoticed while pieces like these are anthologized. The answer, perhaps, lies in—well, perhaps I had better express it in the language that continued concentration on this book has made me much too aware of: If jazz, a spontaneous, deeply-felt folk-art, highly personal and individualistic, is ever to get out of the smoky night-club and into the concert-hall, we may need valid, searching, probing criticism, such as we have had elsewhere from, say, a Harold Clurman, an Edmund Wilson, a James Agee.

Joe Goldberg

## MOVIE REVIEW

### THE GENE KRUPA STORY

It isn't just that *The Gene Krupa Story* has very little to do with jazz; it doesn't have much to do with people either. And I think that Krupa deserves something better. Granted that he has never been the most musical drummer, especially when Jo Jones, Sid Catlett, Dave Tough, etc. were on the same scene; still he isn't trying to put anyone on with his show-biz things; all that flash and sweat and simple emotion that got him his popularity are sincerely intended.

It appeared to me that the director and script writer decided to play it safe by tossing in all the current movie clichés that could possibly fit: the dope bit, teenagers, the 'twenties, a dash of religion (Krupa as novice), the comeback story, and of course, "jazz", that popular commodity. In the confusion, Krupa's life is reduced to that musical comedy chestnut about the kid who makes it big, cuts his old pals, is led astray by evil companions, suffers a little, and finally makes it back. (Dan Dailey could have walked through the part.) The music is no news either—Leith Stevens did the score, and if it isn't precisely interchangeable with the one from *The Wild One*, it is just as skillful, slick and empty. There are "jam sessions" (five guys on camera,

eighteen on sound track), a big band playing *Indiana* over and over, a drum battle between Krupa and Shelly Manne (or maybe it was Sal Mineo and Dave Tough).

Jazz—or "jazz"—is again used, without dignity or value, to work up an atmosphere of hysteria and sexiness and moral confusion. The hysteria is easy: all those teenagers and jitter-bugs ("Go Gene Go", they apparently used to say in 1935), and all that sweaty flailing. The sex is the *Playboy-Esquire*-jazz sort (that alliance) and the movie plays it for all it's worth. Just so everyone gets the idea, the camera on one drum solo, early on in the story, looks across the heaving bosom of an admirer for almost the entire scene, and the jam session sequences are really done as music to make your girl by. (Did we have to have those nuzzling couples and all that decolletage every time?)

As for the marijuana—which got to be fairly central to the plot—it is handled in such a funny way that (fortunately I guess) no one can take it very seriously. Krupa's first encounter with pot is hysterical, and the ratty little guitar player who tries to turn Gene on is a real comedy turn. But so many people kept telling Krupa that he couldn't play the drums "that way" unless he were "on something" that pretty soon I began to believe it. Also a sociological note: the director seems to have gone along with the new Hollywood "liberal" line at least far enough to allow an occasional Negro into the story. The bass players, for instance, are usually Negroes, and a colored actor (who must have studied under the Treniers) keeps turning up on tenor. Then, too, in a party scene, one or two colored girls can be seen floating around in the background, and when the dancing starts, one of them even does a little jiving in a distant sort of way with a white girl. By the time things have gotten down to the nuzzling stage, however, both girls have disappeared completely.

There are a few historical goofs in the picture. These lapses are curious when one considers how scrupulous the director has been in other ways. In a scene that takes place in 1931, a band playing in a smart New York club is all-afay except for the pianist and a trombone player, both Negroes. No one seemed to be leading the band, so the courageous pioneer must go nameless. In another glorious scene, three men carrying instrument cases arrive at a party in Krupa's apartment—the year is about 1935 since we have been told that Gene has already joined Goodman—and one of the visitors turns out to be Bix Beiderbecke. In all fairness, I should report that the actors did look surprised to see old Bix.

Jack H. Batten



# JAZZ IN PRINT

(continued from page 4)

Paul Nossiter sent in a column, Business Outlook, by J. A. Livingston in the Washington Post:

"...GM executives don't confirm, but they no longer deny, that this fall they will provide Buick, Olds, and Pontiac dealers each with a small car. Buick calls these cars the Bops, after Buick-Olds-Pontiac. If so, this will be the lineup: GM ten - Cadillac; Buick, Buick Bop; Oldsmobile, Olds Bop; Pontiac, Pontiac Bop; Chevrolet, Corvair, Corvette."

And Rolls-Royce presumably will have the Ornette Special.

The School of Jazz season this year will run from August 14 to September 2.

A number of \$100 scholarships will be available to students for the first time this year in addition to the special awards which are annually granted. For full

information, contact Jules Foster, Dean, School of Jazz, Lenox, Massachusetts. A letter from Mr. Trombly's Fifth Grade, City School District, Plattsburgh, N.Y.: "Why don't more Americans like jazz?

(We do.)"...The long letter in the February, 1960, Jazz in Print about what musically untrained listeners can absorb from jazz was by Walter von Bebenburg, a German post-doctorate fellow at the chemistry department of Ohio State University... Janet Flanner (The New Yorker's Genet) is often a brilliant writer in her

own field, but is as square as the rest of us when she tries an area in which she's unqualified. For example, her notes for Victor's The Fabulous Josephine Baker: "...On that first night in November, 1925, she founded the European cult for jazz." Josephine and Matisse?

The University of Washington Press, Seattle 5, Washington) is publishing The Anatomy of Jazz by Leroy Ostransky... Hugues Pannasie's Histoire du Vrai Jazz has been published in paperback by Robert Laffont, 30, rue de l'Universite, Paris.

The imprimatur, of course, is by the author...A most useful book (paperback) is Negro Songs from Alabama, collected by Harold Courlander with music transcribed by John Benson Brooks and published with the assistance of the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. If you want to know how to get a copy, write Courlander, care of Folkways Records, 117 West 46th Street, N.Y., N.Y.

They're all taken from Courlander's superb six-volume Negro Folk Music of Alabama on Folkways, a basic set for any jazz library.

According to folk music expert Bruno Nettl in the January, 1960, issue of Ethnomusicology, "the best, or at least the most ethnomusicological study of jazz to have appeared so far" is Der Jazz by Alfons M. Dauer (Erich Roth Verlag, Kassel, 1958). Seventy musical numbers are transcribed... Another new paperback is Jazzrevy by Leif Anderson and Bjorn Fremer (Ab Nordiska, Musikforlaget, Stockholm)...Dizzy

Gillespie is dictating the manuscript for an autobiographical volume. According to Jet, Jon Hendricks said in explaining "why most Negro jazz musicians don't accept whites as greats in the jazz field": "Man, you gotta have more than technical skill; you gotta have soul, funk, humility, and the whites simply won't put down the whip." And how often do Dave and Annie have to use that whip, Jon?

Also, according to Jet - and why didn't any of the white show-biz columnists protest to the Diners Club? - "although thousands of Negroes belong to the Diners Club, sepia newsmen were ignored when the club polled more than 1500 theatrical and night club editors to vote for the top cafe performers to receive their annual awards."

British musician-critic Benny Green (The Observer, Record Mirror) thinks that what Cecil Taylor plays isn't music, but of John Coltrane he writes: "...Behind his notes is the implication of a shriek which, although it never actually appears, lends an element of excitement to his solos which make them quite individual affairs."... Harry Oster, Department of English at Louisiana State University, has recorded several useful albums in Louisiana prisons, particularly sets of work songs, blues and spirituals cut at Angola, where the Lomaxes (John and his son, Alan) found Leadbelly in 1933. For a catalogue, write Folk-Lyric Recording, 3323 Morning Glory, Baton Rouge, Louisiana...Charles Suber, the publisher of

Down Beat, is exercised that I mentioned on WNCN-FM that the current "George Crater" is Ed Sherman. ("Crater" began as a composite contribution of Dom Cerulli, Jack Tynan and others on the staff). I am opposed to any use of pseudonyms whereby a man can attack and insult others (as Sherman has Ornette Coleman in a particularly boorish way) with impunity. One difference between Sherman and Lenny Bruce (whom Sherman wisely admires) is that Bruce has the guts to use his own name. According to the March 7 Los Angeles Mirror-News, sent by Mimi Clar "Don Fisher and Don Erjavec, two teachers at Dominguez High School, have formed the American Jazz Society to create jazz interest among teen-agers. The Society, in operation on 68 campuses in 36 states and Canada, plans an all-star high school jazz orchestra for the Monterey Jazz Festival next fall. Scholarships for promising young musicians will be set up with proceeds from a series of concerts..." Jazz Street with photographs by Dennis Stock and text (small) by this writer will be published by Doubleday in the fall of this year. It's already out in Europe...Look for an important two-volume lp to be issued by Doug Dobell's "77" Label in England — A Treasury of Field Recordings by Mack McCormick, who is mainly responsible for the Lightnin' Hopkins renaissance...Nathan Milstein, in a conversation with Bennett Schiff of the New York Post: "The effort is in the process of arrival, not in the

act itself which is effortless if it is good. There are things you can't explain, thank God. The effort I make is in the preparation I make. It is one mostly of thought. The technique I acquired when I was 7." A fragment of a manuscript. I don't know who wrote it: "Creation cannot take place in jazz without deferment of climax until the end."...The only New York newspaper columnist who continues to badger the police about their harassment of certain folk and jazz night clubs and their administration of the cruel, double-jeopardy cabaret card rules for musicians, waiters and others who work where liquor is sold is Bob Sylvester of the Daily News: "The only thing that bothers me is a law which stops a man from working at the only trade he knows. What is he supposed to do, go out and rob a bank?"...Gene Chronopoulos, 1751 No. Mariposa, Apt. 2, Hollywood, California, wants any article or record review ever printed about Billie Holiday... Whitney Balliett in The New Yorker on jazz dancer Baby Lawrence one night with Charlie Mingus at the Showplace on West Fourth Street: "...he did, in a matter of minutes, what celebrated workers like Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly have only dreamed of these many years." Herb Abramson's new label, Triumph Records, has recorded Baby for the first time. Congratulations to Tony Scott for the directness of his statement to a Variety reporter in Tokyo: "In 1958 I was offered... a tour by the State

Department. They wanted me to go to the Middle East and Japan on a rapid schedule and without any Negroes in my group. They said too many Negroes had been touring. I felt that running through these countries at rocket speed and with what I considered a rigged combo was an odd way to make friends and build cultural understanding. Jack Teagarden made the tour instead — with an all-white band." A note from Rex Stewart that is really addressed to Variety, and I'm delighted to pass it on to Abel Green: "In 1905, or whatever date, your paper started labeling talent 'Negro.' Isn't that day now past?"... A superb article by Mack McCormick in January 1960 Caravan (The Magazine of Folk Music): A Who's Who of the Midnight Special, the background of Texas prison blues. We hope to reprint it in The Jazz Review. The January, 1960, issue of the French medical magazine, Aesculape, is devoted entirely to an article by Frank Tenot, Le Jazz, sa place dans une civilization. It can be ordered from Stechert-Hafner, 31 East 10th St., New York 3, N. Y. Attention: Mr. Lessing. ...Charles Edward Smith has a feature on J. J. Johnson in the April Nugget...Billie Wallington is responsible for Newsleak, a fairly funny semi-newsletter issued by Riverside...An axiom that ought to be repeated on occasion. By Shaw, I think. "Impersonal criticism... is like an impersonal fist fight or an impersonal marriage, and as successful."

Did "jazz" take its name from the name of a real or mythical musician—like Jasper or "Chas"? These two popular stories and a number of related accounts are examined in the second of a series on the history of the word.

## *the word jazz,*

### *part II*

Fradley H. Garner and  
Alan P. Merriam

#### Part II. Folk adaptations

No reputable authority will vouch for them, but by far the most intriguing explanations for the word "jazz" hark back to the names of musicians or vaudeville phrases popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With these names goes a group of fascinating folk tales, passed along by spoken and printed word, and almost all incorporate practically identical turns of plot and incident. The first "proper name corruption" account in print, so far as we know, was in *Music Trade Review*, June 14, 1919. The central character was Jasbo Brown, and the story is told as follows:

**Chicago, Ill., June 9.** Roger Graham, Chicago music publisher, has his own pet theory of the origin of jazz music and firmly believes it to be the true one. Five years ago, in Sam Hare's Schiller Cafe on Thirty-first Street, "Jasbo" Brown and five other alleged musicians, members of what might have been called, with the aid of imagination, an orchestra, dispensed "melody" largely for the benefit of Sam Hare's patrons.

Jasbo doubled with the piccolo and cornet. When he was sober Jasbo played orthodox music, but wrapped around three or four glasses of gin Jasbo had a way of making his piccolo produce strains of the wildest, most barbaric abandon. Strange to say, though, Mr. Hare's patrons, if they could help it, never allowed Jasbo to maintain sobriety while on the job. They liked the thrilling sensation of the piccolo's lawless strains, and when Jasbo put a tomato can on the end

of his cornet it seemed as if the music with its strange, quivering pulsations came from another world. Patrons offered Jasbo more and more gin. First it was the query "More, Jasbo?" directed at the darky's thirst; then the insistence, "More, Jasbo!" directed at the darky's music, and then just plain "more jazz!" (Anon 1919d:32.)

How fast a yarn can travel and what can happen to it en route—even in print—is illustrated by what happened to Jasbo. Less than two months after this account appeared in *Music Trade Review*, it was picked up, apparently by the *New York Telegraph*, then by *Current Opinion*:

Other less erudite musical authorities are satisfied that jazz is purely of American origin. We find the *New York Telegraph*, Broadway's own gazet, for instance, giving the credit to Chicago. "... And Chicago presents as Exhibit A, Jasbo Brown, a negro musician, who doubled with the cornet and piccolo. When he was sober . . . he played orthodox music, but when he imbibed freely of gin . . . he had a way of screaming above the melody with a strange barbaric abandon. One evening a young woman frequenter of the cafe where he held forth, tired of the conventional manner in which the music was played, called out, 'A little more Jasbo in that piece!' The cry was taken up, 'Jazz! Jazz!' and Jazz music was christened" (Anon 1919c:97).

Jasbo popped up again in 1923 in no less an authority than the Lavignac *Encyclopedie de la Musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire* (Singleton 1923:3327), which translated into French, almost word for word, the original *Music Trade Review* version of 1919. It is undoubtedly from this source that Louis Schneider picked up the story and, with a twist here and a turn there, set it down again in 1924 in the journal, *Conferencia*:

C'était a Chicago, au cafe Schiller, tenu par un nomme Sam Hare, dans le 31e avenue. Il y avait la un negre nomme Jasbo Brown, quit avait recrute un orchestre. Jasbo jouait du piccolo (le piccolo est un instrument aigu de la famille des bugles); il jouait aussi du cornet a pistons, pour varier les plaisirs de ses auditeurs. Quand il n'avait pas bu, la musique de ses instruments etait a peu pres possible. Mais quand il avait absorbe quelques cocktails ou quelques verres de genievre cela devenait de la musique exasperee, quelque chose comme les cornets a bouquin de nos Mardi Gras d'autrefois. Et les clients du cafe raffolaient des sonorites desordonnees du piccolo de Jasbo. Plus c'était faux, plus ils etaient contents, et plus ils lui af-

fraient des verre de genievre. Et lui criaient: "Encore, Jasbo!" et, par abreviation: "Encore, Jazz!" (Schneider 1924:223-24).

Variations on the Jasbo theme appeared again in 1925 when an American scholar, J. A. Rogers, shortened the story and added a trombone:

Then came Jasbo Brown, a reckless musician of a Negro cabaret in Chicago, who played this and other blues, blowing his own extravagant moods and risque interpretations into them, while hilarious with gin. To give further meanings to his veiled allusions, he would make the trombone "talk" by putting a derby hat and later a tin can at its mouth. The delighted patrons would shout, "More, Jasbo. More, Jaz, more." And so the name originated (Rogers 1925:219):

In 1926 Jasbo was credited as the master of several instruments and the father of jazz (music):

Toute le monde est maintenant d'accord outre-Atlantique: c'est a Chicago, dans la 31e Avenue, au cafe Schiller, qu'est ne S.M. le Jazz. Le propriétaire de l'establissement, un certain Sam Hare [sic], avait engage en 1915 un negre: Jasbo Brown. Celui-ci jouoit tour a tour, pour distraire les clients, de plusieurs instruments: piston, flute, clarinette, hautbois. A jeun, l'artiste exécutait des melodies agreables, mais lorsque les cocktails faisaient leur oeuvre, il soufflait dans un instrument, en saisissait brusquement un autre et en tirait des sons cacophoniques autant qu'ahurissants. Ce negre, comme tous ses congeneres, avait un sentiment puissant du rythme. Et ses improvisations d'homme ivre amusaient les consommateurs qui lui criaient: 'Allez, Jasbo!' Il eut bientot de nombreux imitateurs a travers l'Amerique. Ils firent comme Jasbo. D'où l'abreviation "jas", devenue "jazz" (Anon 1926: 144).

This version has been quoted, generally without question, by James D. Hart in a 1926 issue of *American Speech*; Coeuroy and Schaeffner in *Le Jazz* (1926); Robert Goffin in the Sixth Edition of his *Aux Frontiers du Jazz* (1932), and others.

The first and to our knowledge only flat rejection came from the French music critic Irving Scherke in 1926. Said M. Scherke: "Le jazz n'a pas de date, et toutes les tentatives qu'on a faites pour lui en donner une sont sans portee . . ." (p. 679). He characterized it as "ridicule et fantaisiste" (*loc. cit.*).

Jasbo Brown had many stand-ins. Paul Whiteman kept the Brown but dignified the Christian name: There is also a legend that a particular jazz darky player named James Brown

and called "Jas" from the abbreviation of his name, was the source of the peppy little word that has now gone all over the world (Whiteman and McBride 1926:122).

A year earlier, *New York Sun* critic Walter Kingsley had called the man Jasper and placed the incident in the first third of the nineteenth century:

In the twenties and thirties of the last century there was a retired planter in New Orleans whose delight it was to entertain visiting show folk. He had a dancing dandy of superhuman vitality and joie de vivre who was his star exhibit whenever he threw a party. This hoofing phenomenon was named Jasper and the other slaves called him "Jazz" or "Jass" for short. Jasper could put life into a cemetery with his quaint steps, his songs, his mugging and clowning. His fame was carried far and wide by strolling troupers. Whenever a party showed up the old planter called in the sure-fire slave and shouted: "Jazz it up, Jasper" (Kingsley 1925: Editorial section 3:1).

Characters, time and locale here are different. Only the plot remains the same. A listener is carried away by the improvisations of a Negro performer and calls out to him, using his nickname, and the nickname eventually is taken over as a generic name for the new music or musical style. The opera critics and early jazz historians, Henry Osgood and Robert Goffin, both told the Jasbo story in their respective books. Goffin also introduced another member of the Jasbo clan, Jess:

Le mot jazz, doit-il son origine a un musicien noir nomme Jess qui jouait d'une certaine facon saccadee, qui se popularisa au point que l'on dit communement *To play like Jess*, *To play Jess* par abreviation, puis jazz par deformation, c'est la l'explication que m'en donnerent plusieurs negres que j'avais interroges (Goffin 1932:44).

Jess apparently didn't rate among other writers, for none we have read, except Goffin, ever mentioned him. Goffin talked about Jess again in a later book, *Jazz: From the Congo to the Metropolitan* (1946:62).

Jasbo had more relatives than the Kalikaks. In 1919 Grenville Vernon of *The New York Tribune* quoted from an interview with James Reese Europe, the leader of an all-Negro military band in World War I. During the interview, according to Vernon, Europe said:

"I believe that the term 'jazz', . . . originated with a band of four pieces which was found about fifteen years ago in New Orleans and which was known as 'Razz's Band' . . . It consist-

ed of a barytone horn, a trombone, a cornet, and an instrument made out of the chinaberry-tree . . . Somehow in the passage of time Razz's Band got changed into 'Jazz's Band,' and from this corruption arose the term 'jazz.'" (Vernon 1919:5).

The vigilant *Literary Digest* snapped up the story (Anon 1919a:28) and it received at least honorable mention by James D. Hart (1932:245) and by Stanley R. Nelson (Goffin 1932:45). Irving Schwerke, of course, debunked it:

Egalement ridicule et fantaisiste est la theorie (si toutefois elle merite ce titre) suivant laquelle le mot jazz devrait son origine a un ensemble de quatre instruments qui se trouvait il y a quinze ans environ a la Nouvelle-Orleans, et que l'on connaissait sous le nom de 'Razz's Band!' (c'est-a-dire, orchestre de Razz) . . . Le 'Razz's Band' passa par degres des plus petits cafes de la Nouvelle-Orleans aux plus grands hotels de cette ville, d'ou il gagna New York. C'est la qu'au bout d'un certain temps, Razz's Band fut metamorphose en Jazz's Band! Il ne serait pas superflu, pour completer l'histoire de nous dire pourquoi les habitants de New York trouverent la conso nne 'J' plus agreable a leur palais que le consonne 'R'. Et l'on pourrait rapporter quantite de contes aussi fantastiques que les precedents, si toutefois ceux-ci ne suffisaient pas a montrer le caractere ridicule de ce qu'on a ecrit sur le jazz et le peu de prix qu'on doit y attacher (Schwerke 1926:679).

Henry Osgood also objected on linguistic grounds, though he liked the story well enough:

This is a good story and as an explanation ingenious enough, though there is no hint as to what reason there could be for the changing of the rugged R of Razz into the softer J of jazz; as a rule the progression is the other way, toward strength. Incidentally, that J at the beginning of jazz is not so soft; much harder than before any other vowel except O. Say jazz and jolt out loud and compare them with jelly, jib and juice. Had we (which we haven't) a soft G before A, as before E and I (geode, gin), "gazz" would be a much more suggestive and correct spelling than jazz (Osgood 1926a:14).

Another member of the clan was introduced in *Etude* in 1924 in a symposium entitled, "Where Is Jazz Leading America?" His name was Charles Washington and his mentor was the bandleader Vincent Lopez: I have been for a long time making a study both of the word "jazz" and of the kind of music which it represents. The origin of the colloquial word jazz is shrouded in mystery. The story of its beginning that is most frequently

told and most generally believed among musicians has to do with a corruption of the name "Charles." In Vicksburg, Miss., during the period when rag-time was at the height of its popularity and "blues" were gaining favor, there was a colored drummer of rather unique ability named "Chas. Washington." As is a very common custom in certain parts of the South he was called "Chaz." "Chaz" could not read music, but he had a gift for "faking" and a marvelous sense of syncopated rhythm. It was a practice to repeat the trio or chorus of popular numbers, and because of the catchiness of "Chaz's" drumming he was called on to do his best on the repeats. At the end of the first chorus the leader would say:

"Now, Chaz!"

From this small beginning it soon became a widespread habit to distinguish any form of exaggerated syncopation as "Chaz." (Anon 1924e:520).

Osgood examined the plot and found it wanting:

Very pretty, indeed, though it will hardly stand examination . . . Leaving out of consideration the chronological question as to whether the "blues" were already known when ragtime was "at the height of its popularity," (it is possible they may have been—in Vicksburg) analysis of the musical elements of the story make it impossible. Few popular ragtime numbers had "trios" to repeat, except marches (two-steps) like "The Georgia Camp-meeting," and when they were repeated there was little emphasis placed upon them . . . (Osgood 1926a:14-15).

In 1934 a professional philologist and criminologist, Dr. Harold H. Bender of Princeton University and Webster's International Dictionary, spoke disparagingly of Chaz. He favored an African origin for the word. So, three years later in the *Saturday Evening Post*, did the writer James H. S. Moynahan: "I dismiss with a leer the canard once attributed—wrongly, I am sure (sic)—to Vincent Lopez, that he had heard the word 'jazz' originated as a corruption of the name of a famous drummer called 'Chas'—short for 'Charles'" (Moynahan 1937:15). Chas (or "Chaz") was mentioned without comment by Hart (1932:245) and by Nelson (Goffin 1932:45-6).

As with the more persistent Jasbo tale, the Lopez version itself sprouted at least one variation containing all the essential elements of the original. This is from an article called "Triumph of the Jungle," by Jasp Kool, *Living Age*, February 7, 1925:

If we may trust a mere story, the word "jazz" comes from a band in a water-



front resort in Philadelphia, which used to have a Negro named Jack Washington playing the drums. This Negro had developed a rhythm so fierce that the band, as a joke, used to stop playing entirely and let Jack rage on the drums alone. When the time came for Jack to play his percussion solos, the sailors would cry in delight, "Jack! Jack!"—and from this cry of theirs the odd name "jazz" is derived (Kool 1925:339).

Moynahan spun a yarn he had heard where the performers were the well-known Dixieland Jazz Band and the spectator was an "old fellow":

The story usually doled out for popular consumption is the one about the Dixieland Jazz Band's job at the Booster's Club in Chicago. The band, brought from New Orleans, was still unnamed when an old fellow in the audience, stirred to high excitement by their shrill, unprecedented style of playing, jumped to his feet and shouted: "Come on, boys, jazz it up!" It makes a good story, even when the reciter goes on to explain that the word "Jazz" was an old vaudeville (!) term, meaning "to stir things up" (Moynahan 1937:15).

There seems to be no end name corruptions. Jezebel is accorded the final indignity in this etymology, submitted in 1927 by a sociologist and educator, Dr. Guy B. Johnson:

The writer would like to add one more to the list of rather asinine theories on the origin of the term jazz. It is his opinion that the word was suggested by Negro preachers in their tirades on the wicked woman, Jazebel (Johnson 1927:15).

The Jasbo stories have been widely circulated in the United States and Europe. The signs point to a single source, probably the June 14, 1919 **Music Trade Review**. Jasbo, James, Jasper, Jess, Razz, Chaz and Jack look very much alike. While the scene is set variously in Chicago, New Orleans, Vicksburg and Philadelphia, it forms the backdrop for just about the same story. A folk tale, by definition, is an account of persons, places and incidents which the tellers themselves are inclined to take with a grain of salt.

One other story bears repeating. It is slightly different from the others and it may be more plausible. It appeared, to our knowledge, only once in the literature—in **Music Trade Review**, May 3, 1919—though the journal credits **The Columbia Record** as the source:

Most people are aware of the fact that "jazz" music originated in the South, but perhaps few know just how the name itself started. The Columbia

Record gives the following explanation: There was once a trio of dusky musicians, one a banjo player, one a singer and the third a maker of melodies by means of an empty tin can. This unusual trio came to be called the Jassacks Band, the name being the popular inversion of the jackass, the famous solo singer of the Southern States. Soon the name, according to the proverbial lore for inaccuracy, was changed to the Jassacks and by the usual method of abbreviation developed finally into just plain jazz (Anon 1919f:50).

#### Minstrel Show and Vaudeville

The possibility of "jazz" getting its name from the minstrel or vaudeville show apparently was first raised in print by a newspaper man, Walter Kingsley, in 1917. While he felt its homeland was Africa, Kingsley in the **New York Sun** spoke of its use in vaudeville and touched off a flurry of articles ascribing the word to that source:

Curiously enough the phrase "Jaz her up" is a common one today in vaudeville and on the circus lot. When a vaudeville act needs ginger the cry from the advisers in the wings is "put in jaz," meaning add low comedy, go to high speed and accelerate the comedy spark. "Jazbo" is a form of the word common in the varieties, meaning the same as "hokum," or low comedy verging on vulgarity (Kingsley 1917:III, 3:7).

Others speculated along the same line, but Kingsley alone spelled the word "Jazbo." When Paul Whiteman got hold of it, he said, in the **Etude** symposium on "What Is Jazz Doing to American Music?":

I am often asked, "What is jazz?" I know of no better definition than that given by Lieut. Comm. John Philip Sousa, U.S.N.R.F. He derives the word from "Jazzbo," the term used in the old-fashioned minstrel show when the performers "cut loose" and improvised upon or "Jazzboed" the tune (Whiteman 1924:523).

Henry Finck, a music critic and writer for **Etude**, evidently borrowed his account from Kingsley's original article in the **Sun**. But he used the word "jazz". "Just so in vaudeville, 'jaz her up' means 'put in pep and ginger.' Not necessarily speed, for an extremely popular jazz is the slow drag" (Finck 1924:527). We have already quoted Moynahan to the effect that jazz "was an old vaudeville (!) term, meaning 'to stir things up'" (Moynahan 1937:15).

Wilder Hobson, the jazz writer, critic, and sometime trombonist, uses still a different spelling in identifying the word as a minstrel term: "Various

sources for the word jazz have been suggested, including . . . the old minstrel-show term **jasbo**, meaning antics guaranteed to bring applause—when new numbers were flopping the backstage cry might be 'give 'em the jasbo' or 'jas it up'" (Hobson 1939: 94-5).

Douglas Stannard used the same spelling in the **New Statesman and Nation**:

"It seems likely that the word as a musical term derives from the old minstrel show backstage cry: 'Give 'em the jasbo' (meaning to introduce pep into an act)" (Stannard 1941:83).

Another account referring indirectly, at least, to the minstrel origin, was reported in **Down Beat**:

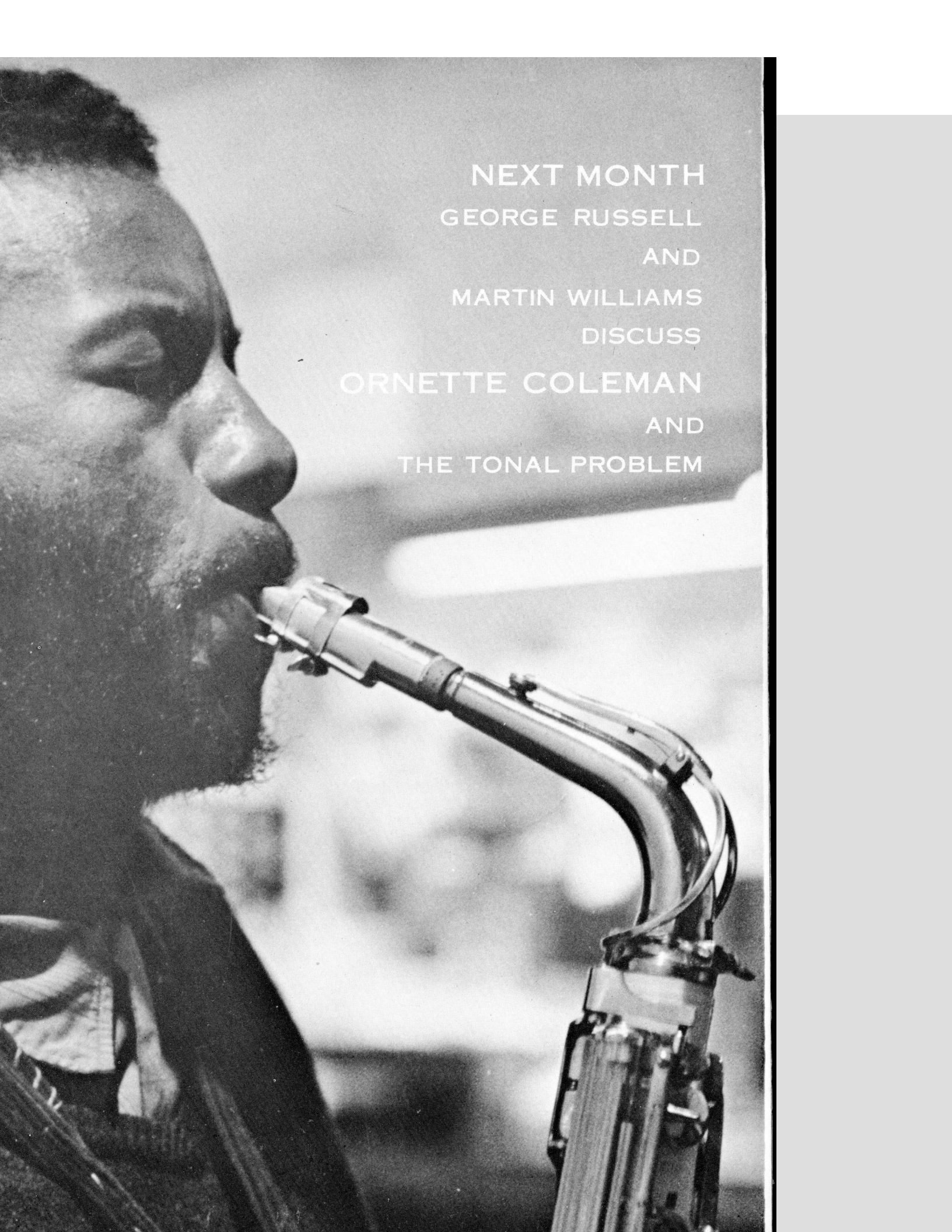
Mutual's [radio network] **Answer Man** came up with what many jazz students have been waiting for: an explanation of the origin of the word jazz . . . in pre-Civil War days, Georgia Negro men competed in strutting contests for their choice of cakes, and ladies, in cake suppers. The strutting contest became known as the Cake Walk, and the winner was dubbed Mr. Jazzbo.

Further research traced the word to New Orleans during the 1830s, when **chasse beaux** was a popular French expression denoting a dandy, or a hip Gallic Don Juan (Anon 1958a:10).

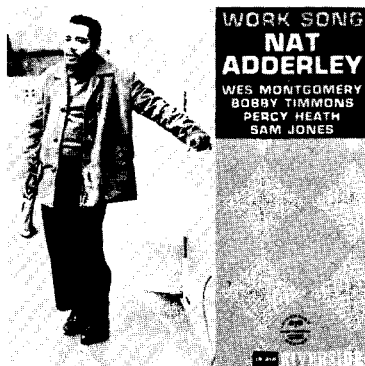
We have not been able to verify the existence of the alleged one-time "popular French expression." If the minstrel term "jazzbo" (regardless of spelling) is assumed to be the father of the word "jazz," we are still left with the problem of "jazzbo's" own ancestry. This leads us up another blind alley—unless we agree with Chapman and others that the root of "jazz" lies in the first three letters of the French verb "jaser"—"to prattle," or unless we subscribe to Walter Kingsley's (and Dr. Harold Bender's) African thesis, or one of the other trans-language etymologies.

Of course if "jazzbo" were spelled **jassbo** or **jasbo** and broken into two syllables, **jass bo**, and if it were assumed that the last syllable was a phonetic spelling of the early Southern Negro pronunciation of "boy," we could say **jas bo** originally meant **Jass boy**—or **Jasper boy** or even **Chas boy**—and that would lead us straight back into the valley of name corruption. If we insist on this hypothesis there is no escape. We do not.

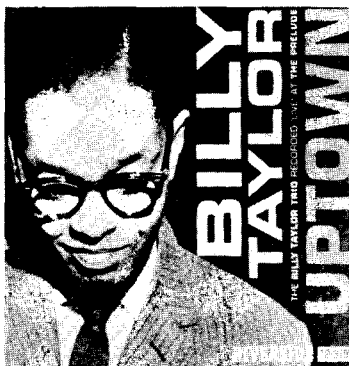
This is the second of a series of articles on the origins of the word jazz. A bibliography giving the sources of references in the text will be published with the last article.



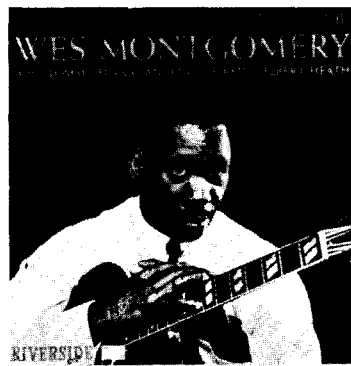
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AND  
MARTIN WILLIAMS  
DISCUSS  
ORNETTE COLEMAN  
AND  
THE TONAL PROBLEM



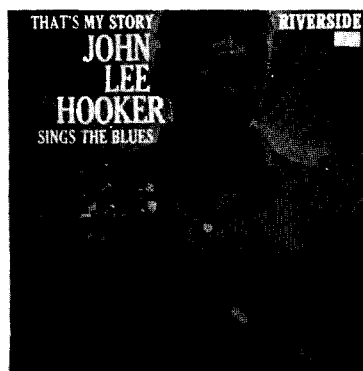
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